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## FEATURES

### GREGG BISSETTE

Gregg Bissonette's abilities are seemingly limitless. Gigs with Maynard Ferguson and Brandon Fields, several years (and a brand new album and tour) with David Lee Roth—these things have made that point very clear. Yet Gregg's enthusiasm and curiosity have as much to do with his success as his skills do—and those attributes are contagious! Get ready to be infected.

•by Robyn Flans

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### CARL ALLEN

Carl Allen isn't one of the most promising players on the jazz scene anymore—this drummer has *arrived*. Gigs and recordings with Freddie Hubbard, Jackie McLean, George Coleman, and Terence Blanchard have made his art and skill indisputable. Here Carl shares what he's learned about swing, improvisation, and much, much more.

•by Bill Milkowski

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### REMEMBERING TINY KAHN

His might not be a household name in the drumming community today, but during a far-too-brief period, Tiny Kahn's drumming swung some of the best bands in jazz. Kahn was also one of the most in-demand and innovative composer/arrangers around. In this retrospective, jazz giants of the era shed light on the Kahn legacy.

•by Burt Korall

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### DRUM TECHS

Perhaps no one gets closer to the sound and technique of drum superstars than their techs. Here four of the top techs in the business give the insider's story on this unique job—and on the drumming of players like John Bonham, Chester Thompson, Jeff Porcaro, and Myron Grombacher.

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## The Best Of Both Worlds



Some time back I had an opportunity to browse through an assortment of music magazines published from the late '50s through the mid '70s. One of the very first things I noticed was the obvious lack of information available for drummers. After reviewing a number of back issues, I only counted six or seven feature interviews with the major drumming figures of those years.

Drum industry advertising was also extremely basic in concept and design back then, and failed to offer much insight on the products advertised. I noted just a handful of small, rather bland drum ads filtered in among the guitar, keyboard, and band-instrument advertising. The percussion industry, and the many advertising agencies that serve it, have certainly come a long way.

However, the key shortcoming was in terms of any meaningful reporting on new products. In truth, one would have been hard-pressed to find anything like the extensive product evaluations we see today. For the most part, drummers had to rely on the manufacturers' literature and the advice of music shop personnel—reliable sources, though not among the most objective. Interestingly, up until the birth of *Modern Drummer* in 1977, and others who have followed our format, there weren't very many places to go for an unbiased opinion. Fortunately, that's a situation drummers no longer need to face.

The industry has benefited in other ways, as well. A product review in a major industry publication tends to put a bit more pressure on a manufacturer. Unlike 30 years ago, an important new product will be scrutinized and often fieldtested by a knowledgeable, experienced reviewer. Most manufacturers are well-aware that the tone of a review can have considerable influence on a product's popularity. In fact, a recent *Percussion Market Research Report* conducted by *MD* clearly showed that product reviews were among the *leading* factors in stimulating interest in a product and influencing its purchase. That's a fact manufacturers must now consider. As a result, most have become more quality-conscious than ever before, which in turn raises the standard across the entire industry.

I see nothing but good coming out of this for all concerned. As a consumer, *you* now have an opportunity to carefully evaluate a new product before you enter the shop to buy it. And that means you'll go in with a better understanding, and in a much better position to make a wise decision. At the same time, the manufacturer is much more inclined to deliver a product that has received favorable press, lest he watch it collect dust on the dealer's shelf. All in all, it's another improvement in the relationship between the consumers of percussion gear and an industry that must strive to satisfy their needs.

*RS*

# MODERN DRUMMER®

EDITOR/PUBLISHER	Ronald Spagnardi
ASSOCIATE PUBLISHER	Isabel Spagnardi
MANAGING EDITOR	Rick Van Horn
FEATURES EDITOR	William F. Miller
ASSOCIATE EDITOR	Adam J. Budofsky
CONTRIBUTING EDITOR	Rick Mattingly
EDITORIAL ASSISTANT	Karen Walsh
ART DIRECTOR	Scott G. Bienstock
ADMINISTRATIVE MANAGER	Tracy A. Kearns
ADVERTISING DIRECTOR	Bob Berenson
ADVERTISING ASSISTANT	Joan C. Stickel
CLASSIFIED ADVERTISING	Lori Spagnardi
SALES AND MARKETING DIRECTOR	Crystal W. Van Horn
CONSULTANT TO THE PUBLISHER	Arnold E. Abramson

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**CONTRIBUTING WRITERS:** Susan Alexander, Robyn Flans, Simon Goodwin, Jeff Potter, Teri Saccone, Robert Santelli, Robin Tolleson, Lauren Vogel, T. Bruce Wittet.

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## READERS' PLATFORM



### Louie! Louie!

Thanks so much for your wonderful interview with Louie Bellson [January '91 *MD*]. I found Louie's words to be insightful and inspirational, and his attitude towards music in general is greatly admirable. I hope Louie's message reaches all drummers; we will be better off because of it. Louie, my hat is off to you!

Joe Bergamini  
East Hanover NJ



### Thanks For The Memories

Thanks so much for a great *15th Anniversary Scrapbook* edition of *Modern Drummer* [January '91]. As a loyal subscriber for all of your 15 years, I'm still thrilled with every issue that I get. I still have my copy of the first issue, which has my mailing label on it. I don't even remember how I originally found out about your publication; I'm just thankful that I did! Keep up the great work; I'm looking forward to another 15 wonderful years of *Modern Drummer*.

Michael Finley  
Sarasota FL



### Ya, Rob!

It was great to see the feature on Rob Affuso in your January issue; it truly depicted the real Rob! He's definitely not a stereotype heavy metal rock star. Rob was my teacher in New Jersey during his early days with Skid Row. I remember—as I'm sure he does—when he used articles from *MD* to teach me in my parents' garage. When we talked a few months ago in a local New Jersey bar (the same one he used to sneak me into when I was underage!), he told me about the feature, and I was anxious to see it. I just want to say that Rob should be an inspiration to

everyone, proving that your dreams can come true if you try hard enough. He also illustrates how important it is, once you've "gotten there," to remember who you are and where you started. Rob, you've come a long way; maybe you'll even get the cover next time!

Tommy Pacconi  
East Brunswick NJ



### Supporting The Masters

Just wanted to say thanks to *Modern Drummer* for your support of the Master Classes held during the Percussive Arts Society Convention in Philadelphia this past November. The sheer volume of information dispensed by all the participants really made for a unique and valuable educational experience. Needless to say, I'm grateful to have been part of the program. A very strong point was made, and I am sure that now these events will be recognized and welcomed for their educational merit. Thanks again.

Ed Soph  
University of North Texas  
School of Music  
Denton TX



### Drumming For Dinner

In his article "The Dinner Theater Drummer," in the December issue of *MD*, Kenneth Ross provided a very accurate description of the drumming responsibilities encountered in theater work. I've only been in theater work for two years, and already I've played close to a dozen shows in about five area theaters. I would highly recommend to any drummer who has the opportunity to play in a theater: Take it! It's an excellent job (especially while in school). Besides getting paid a flat rate for every show, you enjoy a professional atmosphere, you get

to meet other area musicians and establish a reputation, and the variety of playing definitely molds you into a well-rounded drummer. (One of the theaters that I played sponsored a free gourmet meal from the buffet once a week, so I ate well, too!)

John Sanders  
Baltimore MD



### Notes From Abroad

I have been playing drums for ten years and am a member of a Bulgarian rock group. I now have the possibility—for the first time in my life—to receive every issue of *MD*. I am so impressed with all the information and the valuable advice concerning all parts of drumming. Living in a communist country, I had not a chance to read all these things, and it was necessary to lose many years. With your magazine in my hands it is now different. Please excuse my bad English; I read better than I speak and write. Thank you for *MD*.

Bobby Iocheff  
Bulgaria

I'm a recent reader of your magazine, and I think that it's by far the greatest I've ever read. I really enjoyed the "Quintuplet Rock" article by Andy Newmark in *Rock 'N' Jazz Clinic* [September '90 *MD*]. It's amazing how he can make easy-reading lines look like a pro chart, and how—by playing in odd divisions—you can make people go crazy wondering where the hell the downbeat is. Thanks for making the drummer's life a constant renewal and exploding work. Keep on writing!

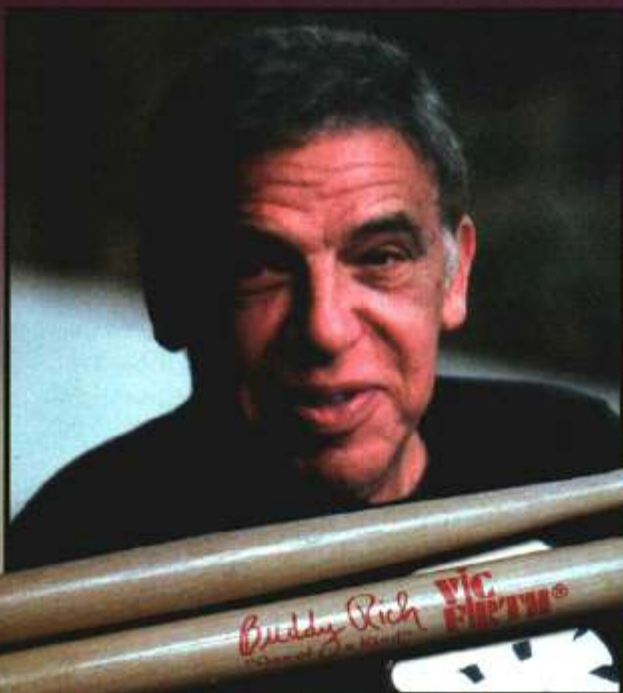
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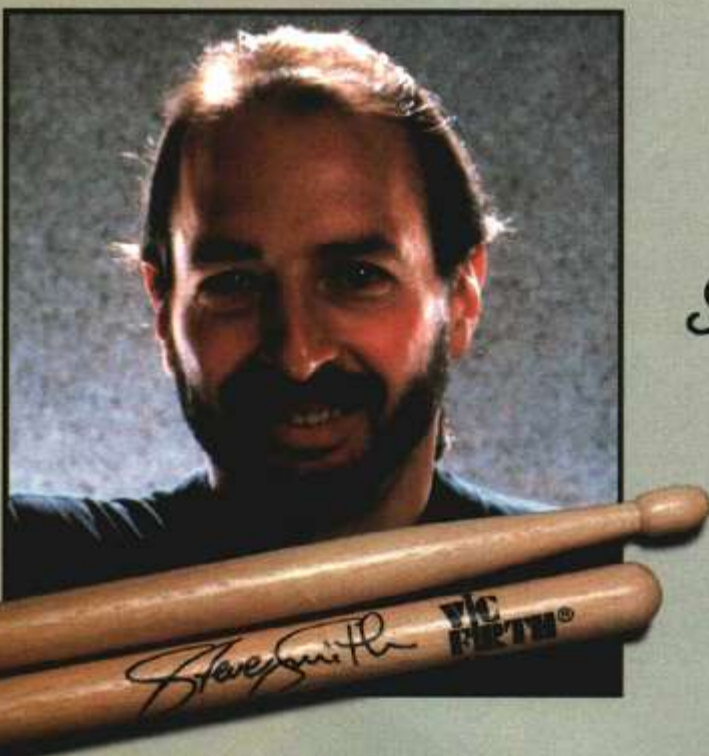
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## Scott Travis

Scott Travis was only 11 years old when Judas Priest released their first album—and not much older when thoughts of joining the band first cropped up in his head. After a futile and rather comical attempt at working his way into the band eight years ago, Travis, at 27, has finally had his dream realized. He joined Priest last year to record *Painkiller*, Priest's twelfth studio album, and has, in turn, given the band a life-saving transfusion.

"I'd always thought I'd be a good addition to the band," Travis says. "And I could never figure out why such a powerful band didn't have a more dynamic drummer. So I made up my mind in 1983 that I was going to be their next drummer," Scott recalls with a laugh. "I found out where they were staying after one of their shows, and I went to the hotel bar. I saw Glenn [Tipton, guitarist] sitting there having a drink. I didn't want to get right to the point, but I started asking him how things were going with

their drummer at the time, Dave Holland. I wanted to show Glenn some pictures of my drums, which I thought were pretty impressive. But he just said, 'Hey,



I'm here to relax, okay?'" So I didn't bother him anymore. It's kind of funny, but at the time, I'd actually thought about hauling my drums out to the arena parking lot before the show, setting up, and playing as their bus drove up. But I probably would have been arrested before the band ever got a chance to see me!"

The 6'6" Travis came to audition for Priest after recording three albums with Los Angeles cult favorite Racer X (which featured guitar whiz Paul Gilbert) and making an instructional drum video. And everybody involved is happy with the band's latest addition—even if it is eight years too late as far as Travis is concerned.

In concert, Judas Priest has unearthed classics it hasn't performed in years, attracting new fans and bringing back old ones with rejuvenated musical intensity.

• Mott Peiken

## Willie Ornelas

If Willie Ornelas is a new name to you, it's only because most of his work is in the television and film media, and those players often go unrecognized. But the list of Willie's work in the last several months speaks for itself. He has recorded the main theme for the new show *Blossoms* with Dr. John, as well as having worked on such shows as *Broken Badges*, *LA. Law*, *Thirtysomething*, *Down Home*, *Get A Life*, *Cop Rock* (with Randy Newman), *Hunter*, and *Wise Guy*. Ornelas says he is particularly enjoying *Wise Guy*, since the lead character is Cuban, so they are recording a lot of ethnic-sounding music. Consequently he has gotten to work with Luis Conte, Alex Acuna, and Efrain Toro. Willie has also worked on such films as *The Jetsons* and *To Sleep With Anger*, and on assorted jingles.

What goes into recording TV music? "You have to be able to do several different things," Willie replies. "One of them is to be able to read music well. Another is to be able to read music that is not written well, and you have to be able to read music into it. On the first time down, they want you to be able to realize what style it is, to play accordingly, and to try to get through it as fast as possible. To them, time is money, and you can see it on the composer's face when somebody starts making mis-

takes and they're worried about going into overtime.

"Usually for orchestral stuff, you'll run through it one time to make sure the copyist didn't make any copying errors on the charts. Unless it sounded horrible, you'll start recording the time after that. If it's just rhythm section, it's a little looser. I did a session for the show *Parker Lewis* with Dennis McCarthy, and he had a piece of music that was just basically chord charts. We played it down one time and then he said, 'You know, that just doesn't sound right. Let's do the same thing, but do it reggae.' And it's not that it takes more time; he expects you to be able to cover it very quickly."

Once or twice a week, you can see Willie play in the Los Angeles area with Funk Attack, a band he hopes will be doing some recording of its own soon. "If I'm in the studio all day long, I'm not going to come home and practice. In the studio, the rule is simplicity. It's not that it doesn't require a whole lot of me, it just doesn't allow me to play a lot. Aside from funk being my favorite thing to play, I like the fact that it forces me to reach, and playing live reminds me why I got into music to begin with."

• Robyn Flans



## David Derge

David Derge says versatility is the key to being David Benoit's drummer. "David's material is as eclectic as you can hope to get in one band. It ranges from straightahead bebop, like on his record *Waiting For Spring*, to all-out fusion with a little more rock influence. He's apt to maybe even call a standard out of the blue while we're on stage. Also, he requires a lot of dynamics and a very musical approach.

"We usually travel with just a quartet, so we have to really make the most of that," David says. "Sometimes we'll get a full orchestra, like when we played the Greek Theatre in LA: We had David Pack and Jennifer Warnes singing, backup singers, brass—the whole works. Also, being an excellent sightreader doesn't hurt because his writing often has a lot of tricky metric things, with odd meters and things like that." David adds that the reading also comes in handy for the work he does on Benoit's TV ventures, such as the music for *Peanuts* cartoons and some *Garfield* cartoon specials, which are more orchestral in nature.

Derge is also on Benoit's hit jazz album, *Inner Motion*, which was actually his first major recording experience. "It was a little scary," he admits. "I played on half of the record, and a lot of the stuff I recorded was done live with a full orchestra, so there was a lot of pressure. But it was a neat experience, and because he didn't want an overly produced record, it sounds like it really sounded when we played. Everything went down

the first or second take," Derge says, adding he is currently working on a new Benoit LE

David can also be heard on a tribute record to Emily Remler. "David was a big fan of hers and asked her to do the *Waiting For Spring* record, which was done before I joined. She toured with us and died shortly thereafter. She was 32 and had a heart attack. Her record company wanted to do a tribute record to her, so David, Bob Feldman, the bass player, and I did it."

In addition to all of the above, when Derge is available, he plays gigs with Grant Geissman, Full Swing, Eric Marienthal, Clare Fisher, and Terry Trotter, and some show-type gigs with Lainie Kazan and Gloria Loring.



• Robyn Flans

## Simon Wright

Some people may not understand why drummer Simon Wright would voluntarily leave AC/DC, but that's exactly what he did after the group's last tour. His new direction has been to become a member of Ronnie James Dio's band, and Simon seems to be a lot more content with his present job.

"It's great," Simon begins. "We were on the road quite a bit in support of *Lock Up The Wolves*, and obviously we've gotten a lot tighter as a band. Playing-wise I get the chance to let loose a

bit. Now and then I do get the reins pulled on me, but you can't go too crazy, even with this. However, this is exactly what I was looking for."

Simon had been with AC/DC for seven years, and he says that switching over to Dio's outfit was a big change. "I'd known Ronnie for several years, and he had called me up and asked me if I was doing anything. AC/DC wasn't doing anything for a couple of years. He asked me to work with him on a new band he was putting together, which for me was

like getting another limb. I decided that I had to take chances and make changes at some point in my life, and it's worked out real well. There were a lot of kids on the last tour who asked me, 'Who do you like working with more, AC/DC or Dio?' The answer is simple: They're both great bands. But this is a new start for me, and I'm very happy with the change. It's incredible to see Ronnie's heart and soul being so into the band, first and foremost. It rubs off on everyone."

• Teri Saccone

## Jay Schellen

With each successive release, Los Angeles hard rock band Hurricane increases its audience. *Slave To The Thrill*, their latest, builds on their past success.

Jay Schellen, Hurricane's drummer, is busy doing clinics (aside from Hurricane's recent U.S. headlining club tour). "I've done a lot of teaching in the past," he explains. "When I was young I worked in a music store where I set up a lot of clinics for Carmine Appice, Alan Dawson, Louie Bellson, Lenny White, and many others. I got a lot of pointers from every one of those guys, which was really great."

Schellen, who meditates regularly, says that when he plays,

it's an experience that blends his physical and metaphysical sides. "When I play," he comments, "it's almost like I'm totally out of my body. The intellectual side of playing is not present at all. I think about it only when I warm up, or when I'm talking to someone about drumming. But when I go on stage to play, I let myself go. There's no separation between me and the drums, and the sounds in my head happen on the drums at the same time. If you can reach the level of concentration where you can get so into something and be so 'on' consistently, then you'll be a success at drumming—or whatever else you do."

• Teri Saccone

## David Rath

"The motto of this band is to musically try anything, and that's the only way I would have it," states David Rath, drummer with Heaven's Edge. "I have a combination of Top-40 and heavy rock experience as far as the bands I was in before Heaven's Edge. With Heaven's Edge, I get the chance to play heavy—as heavy as I want to—but in a fairly commercial way. It's a great mixture!"

Although Heaven's Edge is a CBS act who released their debut album in mid 1990, David, as of this writing, still holds a day job to pay the bills. "It's a bad enough situation, because I really hate my day job to begin with," says David, an economics degree graduate of Villanova. "What makes it worse is knowing your video is on MTV while you're at the factory all day. Still, I have enough faith in this band to know that it's going to happen for us. You have to really love what you do in order to stay determined, and I do love it."

• Teri Saccone

## News...

**Tony Braunagel** recording and doing live gigs with Rene Geyer, and recording with Francesca Beghe, Edgar Winter, and Bonnie Bramlett.

**Michael Blair** producing Two Nice Girls, in the studio with former dB's Peter Holsapple and Chris Stamey, and with Italian songwriter Mimmo Locasciulli.

**Bobby Chouinard** on the new Billy Squire album, *Creatures Of Habit*.

**John Langley** on the road with Blue Aeroplanes.

**Fred Young** and the Kentucky Headhunters working on their second LE

**Ronald Shannon Jackson** has a new album out titled *Red Warrior* on Island records. He also recently completed another album, called *Taboo*, for Virgin. It's available as an import.

**John Riley** recently toured Europe, playing 40 dates in 44 days with John Scofield. John can be heard on new releases by Bob Mintzer and Haze Greenfield, and he can be seen on Scofield's new laser disc/video, *Live 3 Ways*.

**Frank Colon** was in Brazil last fall recording and touring with several artists. The tours were with Victor Biglione and Terri Lyne Carrington, and the album was with Andrea Marcelli and included percussionists **Laudir D'Oliveira** and **Sidney Moreira**.

Congratulations to **Alvino Bennett** and his wife Kerry on the birth of their son, Kristopher Jordan.



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—Nat Hentoff. "... a splendid achievement." —Artie Shaw

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## ASK A PRO



### Simon Phillips

**Q** We are two young Italian drummers, and you are our idol. Your works with Mike Oldfield, Pete Townshend, Mick Jagger, and the Who are wonderful. We'd be pleased to know: How did you study five-, six-, and seven-note groupings? Which method or book did you study for your bass drum technique? What is your warm-up before practicing or playing a gig? And finally, why don't you make an educational video?

Andrea Serafino  
Roberto Segala  
Latina, Italy

**A** Thanks for all your kind comments. To answer your questions in order:

1. I didn't study five-, six-, and seven-note groupings specifically. I just became aware of them while listening to various players and tried to copy them.
2. I didn't use any method books for my bass drum technique; there weren't many around on double bass drum when I started. I made up my own exercises by basically doing the same rudiments that were applied to hands.
3. Before a concert I loosen up by playing on a towel or

sofa—anything quiet. I go through various rudiments (single, double, and triple paradiddles, single-, double-, triple-, and quadruple-stroke rolls, and anything else I can remember at the time). I play at a comfortable speed and jumble up all the above rudiments with the object of making the transitions between each of them as smooth as possible. If someone were listening to me, they shouldn't be able to tell the change of sticking used until they actually saw it.

4. Regarding a videotape, I don't know why I haven't made one yet; perhaps it's about time I do so.



### Max Weinberg

**Q** What are your views on recording with a click track to keep perfect time? Do you use one? I personally find that it distracts me from really "playing" the sound, and that it makes the drum track very sterile-sounding—almost like a drum machine. By the way, congratulations on years of outstanding rock 'n' roll drumming!

John Mauro  
Highland Park NJ

sequencers, the click track has become yet another "tool" in the drummer's work bag. Look at the click as an ally, not an

adversary. Figure out how to place the beat ahead, dead on, or behind the click—you'll be amazed at how it will improve your control. Remember: The click is there for reference, and the more you play with one, the less you'll "hear" it when you are asked to play along with one. Please also remember that just because a piece of music is in time does not mean that it grooves; that's a higher level and the one to which all musicians should aspire. So even if you are using a click, your job is still to make the music feel good.



**A** The primary objective for the drummer in any playing situation is to help make the music feel good. It makes no difference if a click track is used to affect that feeling or not. If it feels good—it feels good! As you know, since the advent of "dance" music in the 1970s and the use of drum machines and

Thanks for the compliment, John. All those years of making music with our band were, indeed, a pleasure! And for your information, the only song we ever recorded with a click was "Dancing In The Dark" (1984), which we wanted to feel like a true '80s dance tune.





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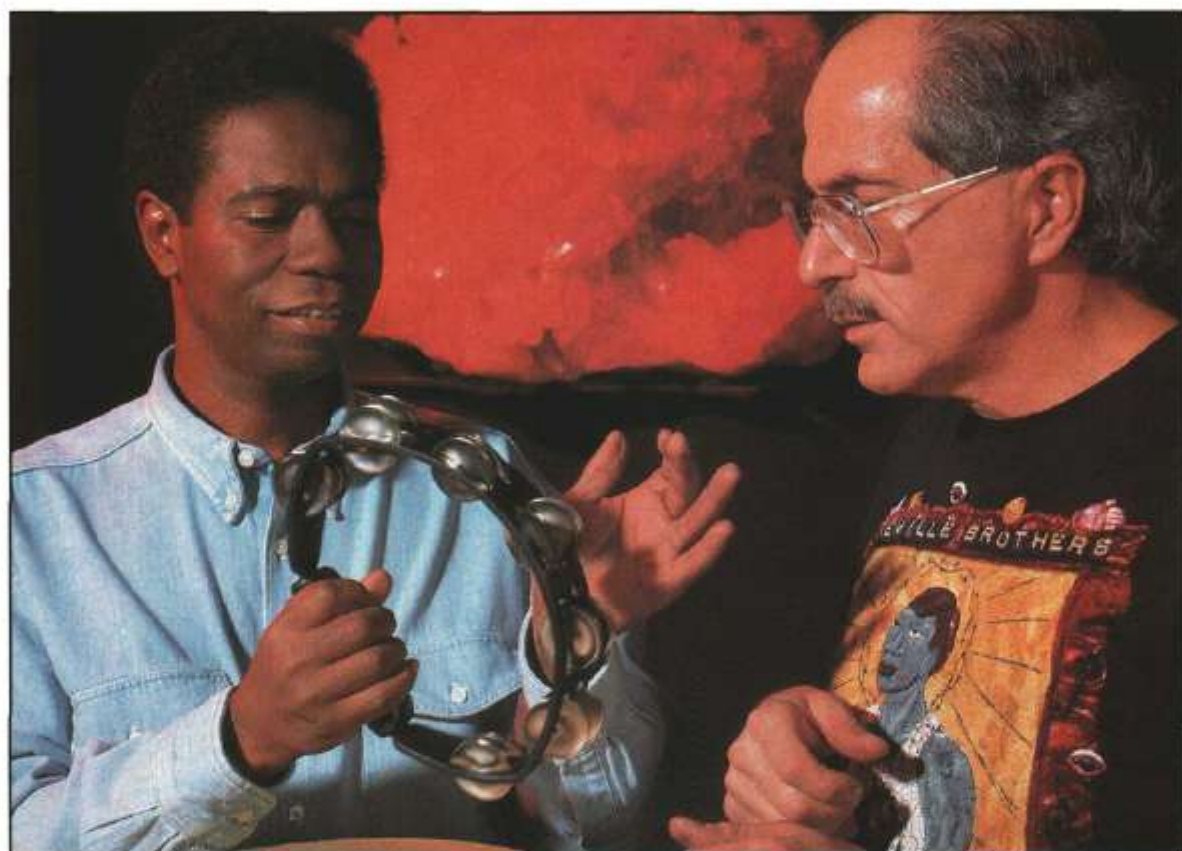


Photo by Cameron Wong

*Paulinho da Costa and Martin Cohen discussing jingle design.*

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## IT'S QUESTIONABLE



### **Q** Bass Drum Connectors?

I have two Ludwig 26" bass drums. Is there anyone out there who has the hardware to connect them end to end?

Gino Maisano  
Dearborn MI

**A** We are unaware of any commercially available hardware specifically designed to link two bass drums together end-to-end. However, you can do this yourself by following these steps:

1. Remove one of the T-handle tension rods from one of your bass drums. Take it to a drumshop and, using it as an example for thread size and overall length, obtain drumkey-operated tension rods to replace all the rods for one head of each bass drum.
2. Remove the front head from one bass drum and the batter head from the other.
3. Place one of the counterhoops back on the exposed shell of one of the drums.
4. Place the two exposed shell edges end-to-end, and rotate the front drum slightly so that the tension casings are staggered in relation to those on the back drum. (It may be necessary to remove the hardware from the bass drum spurs in order to do this).
5. Center the counterhoop over the "seam" between the two shells.
6. Replace all the claw hooks for both bass drums, using the new key-operated tension rods. Carefully tighten up the rods so that the shells are held securely together by the force of the tension rods pulling in opposite directions on the central hoop. Don't tighten them too much, lest you damage the bearing edges of the drums. (A small strip of foam weatherstripping placed between these edges as a cushion might be a good idea.) Since there might not be clearance between the key heads and the drumshells to fit a drumkey, you may have to use a small open-end wrench to do your tightening.

7. You'll need to find some way of supporting and elevating the front bass drum shell, since you won't be able to use the spurs and since there may be a tension lug against the floor. You can still buy hoop-mounted spurs from some companies; these could go on the front hoop of the front shell. Or, you could use some fairly soft, but firm, support completely under the shell itself. The simplest and least expensive might be a moderately wide sand bag.

The beauty of this method is that it doesn't cost much (only the price of the tension lugs and possibly the hoop-mounted spurs), and it is totally reversible if you find that you don't like the result. The biggest problem you'll have is finding some way to carry this mega-drum around!

### **Q** CB-700 Drum Parts?

I own a 14" snare drum that is approximately nine years old. Although it carries the CB-700 brand, it appears to have been manufactured by Pearl, since it has Pearl lugs. The nuts inside the lugs are breaking in half, and the hoops are warped. As you can imagine, the drum is nearly impossible to tune. I would like to know of any way I could buy new lugs and hoops to fit the drum. It has too much value for me to get rid of it.

D. Drake  
HarrisburgPA

**A** Bob Wood, customer service manager for Kaman Music Corporation (who market the CB-700 line), says that you are correct in assuming that your drum was manufactured for Kaman by Pearl. Kaman still carries swivel nuts that fit this snare drum; they are a standard size of 7/32". The model number to ask for is #4053 Swivel Nut Small. These list for \$.50 apiece.

As for your hoops, you didn't mention how many key-rod holes your present hoops have, but hoops for all CB-700 snares are available in both 2mm *Power* and 1.5mm regular models. Both hoops and swivel nuts can be purchased from any music dealer or drumshop that carries CB, Gibraltar, or other Kaman Percussion products.

### **Q** PD-11 Problems?

I just bought a set of Roland pads, and I have the *PD-11* Bass Pad Controller running through a Roland *Octapad II*, triggering an Alesis *HR16* sound module. The problem is that the *PD-11* double-triggers when I don't want it to. I have already adjusted the Velocity Curve and Sensitivity to "1" on the *Octapad*. I've also adjusted the Pad Response on the Alesis to "Soft"—and still the setup double-triggers every so often. Do I need to get an ultra-soft felt beater? Please help; I don't want to get rid of this pad if I don't have to.

Bill Rudy  
Kissimmee FL

**A** We referred your question to Roger Maycock, product specialist at Roland, who told us that the problem you describe is most likely the result of a loose sensor in the *PD-11* pad. The double-triggering effect is the result of "slap back" that occurs when the sensor is struck and then bounces back and triggers a second time. Roger recommends that you have an authorized Roland service facility inspect the drum pad. You can check with your dealer for such a facility, or contact Roger at RolandCorp U.S., 7200 Dominion Circle, Los Angeles, California 90040, (213) 685-5141.





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# Gregg

A man with a mullet hairstyle, wearing a black tank top and a silver chainmail vest, is pointing a drumstick at the camera. He is in a cluttered room with pipes and wires. The name "Gregg" is written in large orange letters in the top left corner.

# Bissonette





By  
Robyn Flans

Photos By  
Neil Zlozower

**M**y eyes fixed on a bobbing blonde head in the darkened Forum. The unabashed pleasure this man was deriving from the music had attracted my attention. I had a feeling I recognized him from behind, even though I was rows away and he was standing on the arena floor. When it hit me, it was no surprise. We were at a Paul McCartney concert, so it all started to gel: Gregg Bissonette was a fellow Beatles fan of the serious kind, and those were his blonde locks flying in beat to the music.

When we ran into one another backstage, you couldn't scrape Gregg off the ceiling. He called it the best day of his life, for, thanks to Chris Whitten, he had met Paul McCartney. I understood what that meant, for Gregg and I had often talked about how the Beatles were responsible for the careers each of us has chosen.

The Beatles infused Gregg with the desire to play music at a young age. That, combined with the education in jazz that his parents encouraged, created the musical balance that is Bissonette today.

Getting into private lessons and competitions, Gregg's next natural step was enrollment into a music college such as North Texas State. For Gregg, it was the perfect learning ground. In Warren, Michigan, where he grew up, there had been only three other drumset players besides Gregg. Suddenly there were 125 other drummers to watch, many other musicians to play with, and a general music education to be had that Gregg now says was invaluable. While he admits a good deal of what he learned there doesn't exactly apply to his current situation, he did have occasion recently to arrange a big band tune that David Lee Roth demoed. Mostly, though, that education provided him with the songwriting capabilities that he uses for the Roth gig. And certainly Gregg's playing in the NTS lab band paved the way for his first big gig with Maynard Ferguson.

Most important to Gregg's success, however, is his musical open-mindedness. Very recently Gregg has put that broad musical taste to the test in a number of situations. He has, of course, played the hard rock of David Lee Roth. His swing chops were required at the Buddy Rich memorial concert last year. And he recently did a record with Brian Wilson of the Beach Boys *and* a Nike jingle that featured only him and three other drummers—Vinnie Colaiuta, Rick Marotta, and John Robinson. Why don't we rewind a bit with Gregg and trace some of the roots of his versatility?

**RF:** In our previous interview, we talked about the lessons you had as a youngster. But what about your home study? Was it intense?

**GB:** When I first started out, I'd go down to the basement, where my dad's drums were set up, and I would try to play along with Beatles records. The second album is the one I played with the most—the one with "Long Tall Sally." I think I practiced with the first side of that more than any other record. As I got a little older, I would put on different records like *The Best Of The Guess Who*, and I'd practice with those. I would close my eyes and imagine that the drummer needed a sub that night. I'd put the record on and come from behind the drums, pretending like I was going on stage. I'd put the headphones on and start playing the song, and I'd close my eyes and pretend I was playing with that band. I remember playing to a lot of Grand Funk, Alice Cooper, Chicago.... Plus, growing up in Detroit, I was exposed to a lot of Motown music, and I practiced a lot to that as well. I mostly tried to do it all by ear, trying to play closely to what the drummer on the record did. If they did something I couldn't really figure out, the best way I learned was to go back with the needle and go over that lick or that beat and try to get it by ear.

I really have to give the credit to my mom, Phyllis, for getting me set up with a teacher and private lessons. She always found time in her busy schedule to take me to my drum lessons. And she'd take me all over the state for solo and

ensemble competitions—even six and a half hours by car to the Interlochen Music Camp every summer. She also encouraged me to practice and made sure I knew my new beats, fills, and exercises.

At the same time I was doing the fun stuff—playing with records and jamming with little buddies of mine—I got into taking lessons and working out of the Haskell Harr books and the rudimental stuff. I remember at first being really, really bored with it. But my parents would say, "Look, we're paying six dollars a half hour for these lessons, and if you don't practice the stuff you're supposed to practice, you're going to have to stop." I remember thinking, "Oh no, I can't stop," but at the same time those five-stroke rolls and flams were really getting boring, because I just wanted to jam. The other stuff I practiced were books like Jim Chapin's *Advanced Techniques For The Modern Drummer* and Carmine Appice's *Realistic Rock*, and also a Joel Rothman book called *Rockin' Bass Drum*. There was a really great Joe Morello book that helped me a lot called *Rudimental Jazz*, which showed how you could apply rudiments around the drumset and play all sorts of fill ideas.

**RF:** When did you start getting into the different styles?

**GB:** I think probably around junior high. We had a stage band, which was kind of a big band. We'd do a Latin tune, though it wasn't *really* Latin. But I'd do my version of Latin, and then we'd do another tune that would be a ballad with





brushes. Then another would be an uptempo swing tune, and another would be like Maynard Ferguson's "Chameleon," which is actually a Herbie Hancock song, but Maynard had a great arrangement of it. But more than anything, what got me into playing different styles was playing trumpet. That was always my second instrument, and all through junior high and high school I mostly played trumpet in the band. Drums were kind of extracurricular for me. I played trumpet in the concert band and the stage band, and we always played arrangements of Buddy Rich, Maynard, and Bill Chase tunes, things like that. Bill Chase was this really great trumpet player who passed away, and another great one was Don Ellis, and then there was Maynard. I was really fascinated by all those trumpet players, and that got me into wanting to do some of the different styles.

**RF:** From the Beatles to big band. For a kid, that's kind of heady.

**GB:** I think a lot of it came from my parents. They used to joke with their friends, "We had to strap him in his chair to make him listen to Buddy Rich's big band." I remember at first hearing the jazz stuff and thinking, "Man, this is not happening. I just want to play the rock stuff." But they'd say, "Check this out," and the more I got into it.... They took me to see Buddy Rich, and I sat about two rows away. From that day on, I was just sold. But all I'd say was, "I want to listen to the Beatles." Then one day my dad came home with tickets to see the Beatles at the Olympia Hockey Arena in Detroit. The whole family went, and I just freaked seeing them. If my parents had said, "You can't listen to this kind of music," then I would have probably said, "Well, I'm not going to listen to the jazz stuff either." But since they were taking me to see the Beatles one week, and the next week to see Buddy Rich, I went, "Cool!"

**RF:** I'd like to talk about how you were introduced to some of the styles, how you began to learn to play them, and some tips for approaching those styles. What differentiates one style

from another? Let's start with big band swing.

**GB:** The first time I was ever introduced to big band swing was Count Basie's band, when I was in elementary school. I remember sitting there in the high school gymnasium. The whole band was sitting down in their suits and ties, and I thought, "It's probably going to be soft because it's jazz. They don't have electric guitars. It will probably be boring." Then Count Basie came walking out from the side of the stage, and the band was playing his theme song really softly.

## A Little Inspirational Listening

Listed in order of preference, here are the albums Gregg says represent his drumming the best:

Album Title	Artist	Label/Catalog#
Eat "Em And Smile	David Lee Roth	Warner Bros. 25470
Skyscraper	David Lee Roth	Warner Bros. 2S671
A Little Ain't Enough	David Lee Roth	Warner Bros.*
Live From San Francisco	Maynard Ferguson	Palo Alto/TBA PAC-8077
The Other Side Of The Story	Brandon Fields	Nova 8602
Views Of The Future	Pat Kelly	Nova 8704
Thunder From Down Under	Frank Gambale	JVC VICJ-14
Heartbeats	Yarborough & Peoples	

And here are the albums Gregg says he listens to most for inspiration:

Album Title	Artist	Drummer	Label/Catalog#
Ghost In The Machine	The Police	Stewart Copeland	A&MSP-3730
The Beatles' Second Album	The Beatles	Ringo Starr	Capitol C41 G-90444
1984	Van Halen	Alex Van Halen	Warner Bros. 23985
"Four" & More	Miles Davis	Tony Williams	Columbia PCT-09253
Spectrum	Billy Cobham	Billy Cobham	Atlantic 7268
Night Dreamer	Wayne Shorter	Elvin Jones	Blue Note CDP-84173
Friends	Chick Corea	Steve Gadd	
Los Lobotomies Live	Los Lobotomies	Vinnie Colaiuta,	Japanese Import
		Jeff Porcaro,	
		Carlos Vega	
Led Zeppelin II	Led Zeppelin	John Bonham	Atlantic 19127
Brother To Brother	Gino Vannelli	Mark Craney	A&M 3170

\* Unavailable at press time

Out of print at press time. (CDs of older records are continuously being released, so keep your eyes open.)

He sat down at the piano and did this little two-finger solo in a whisper. I was thinking, "I don't know how long this concert is going to go, but if it's all going to be like this, it's going to be really boring." Then he made his hand into a gun, looked at the audience, and went like he was going to shoot the band. The trumpet players got their horns up to their mouths, and the trombones and the drums just kicked in, and all of a sudden it was *wailing*. I almost fell off my seat. It was as powerful as Led Zeppelin. It was cool.

I remember seeing Buddy Rich for the first time and not really knowing anything about what it meant to technically play what he was doing. On the way home, my folks asked what I thought of the concert; if I had to think of one thing, what did I pick up on? We had been sitting about two or three chairs away from his bass drum, which was unpadded, so I said, "The thing I remember most is, you really can't play too loud." My parents were like, "That's the thing you remem-

bered?" [laughs] But when a guy like Buddy Rich wanted to bring it down to a whisper, he'd pull out brushes, and the older I got, the more I started realizing how much control the drummer really has of the dynamics in the band. If you're playing with brushes and you're the time-keeper, and the horns are listening to you for the time and you're just playing at a whisper, they're going to have to really get down to a whisper, too. And the minute you come up, they will. You can control the dynamics so well. I remember my band directors in junior high and high school telling me, "When you're playing big band swing—or any kind of music, for that matter—you really control the dynamics of the band more than anyone else."

How did I really start learning it? I think the most important thing was getting the interest, and that had to come from going to concerts. The records just weren't going to compete with Led Zeppelin. I think with all these styles, the one thread is going to be just putting on the headphones and listening to the records and trying to pick as much out of there as you can by ear. From listening to the records, I think I kind of figured out what the rules were. You didn't have to just go "ding, ding, da-ding."

Here's some advice for students: If you are working with a teacher out of a book like Jim Chapin's—which is a swing-oriented book that deals with coordination—even though there is only one ride cymbal pattern in that whole book, you

should try to mix it up with all sorts of ride cymbal patterns. Don't think so much about playing exercises or patterns, but try to play around different members of the band, and really listen. When you're playing jazz—or any style of music, but especially jazz—to really listen and to try to take things to different levels of intensity and creativity just by listening is the most important thing. Maybe the piano player decides he's going to start playing more like McCoy Tyner, and you think, "Wow, it might work really well if I tried"—and I want to emphasize the word "tried"—"to play like Elvin Jones." The way I really started to learn was to get the records by Buddy Rich, Maynard, Stan Kenton, Woody Herman, Count Basie, and Thad Jones/Mel Lewis, and just play along with them and try to emulate them. Then the next step would be to get together with a teacher and try to work on your swing feel and what you can do with brushes. There are some really fantastic books on brushes nowadays, and a teacher can really help with that type of thing.

I know that music in the schools is really suffering right now. It's not what it used to be when I was growing up, where there were really great band programs and a jazz band that was in the curriculum. But the next step would be, if there is any way at school to get in a band where you can at least play some of these charts and get a feeling for it—with somebody who knows what's going on—do it. Another thing: Try to record yourself whenever you play, and then bring that tape in





to your teacher. A lot of times teachers don't really get to hear you play or jam. They hear you work on the exercises in the book, but they don't really get to hear what your time feels like or if you rush or you drag. One of the most beneficial things to me was bringing in a tape and playing it for my teacher and asking, "What do you think?"

**RF:** You were already playing rock, so how did jazz differ for you? What things did you have to concentrate on then?

**GB:** A lot of the rock stuff I was playing was more straight-8th kind of stuff. Before I played any kind of jazz stuff, I had a harder time with anything that had a shuffle feel to it. A lot of jazz time and swing time is made up of triplets, and feeling a triplet within a ride cymbal pattern for swing is everything. Everyone accents triplets differently. You'll hear Elvin Jones accenting the last triplet. When I think about it today, that kind of an accent scheme is exactly the same as Frank Beard with ZZ Top doing "La Grange." At first, I didn't realize it, but the swing stuff would enhance all of the rock stuff. It's funny, because the way it differentiates is almost the way it connects. The more I got into listening to groups like Jimi Hendrix...Mitch Mitchell was a drummer who was way into Buddy Rich, and he was an excellent jazz player, as was Ginger Baker with Cream. I started realizing that jazz was really connected. The more I started to get into bands that were in the middle like Blood, Sweat & Tears and Chicago—guys like Bobby Colomby and Danny Seraphine—I realized that they were kind of connected to both things too.

**RF:** But what about the basic elements, like jazz time being more up on the ride cymbal—the rules, per se?

**GB:** First of all, when you're playing swing, your main time source comes from your right hand and your hi-hat. Even if you're just playing quarter notes on your right hand and your hi-hat is on 2 and 4, that's enough to lock a band in and make them swing. But when you're playing rock, your main time source kind of comes from your hi-hat, your snare drum, and your bass drum. Your bass drum is usually playing 1 and 3, and your snare drum is on 2 and 4. In swing it's right hand, left foot, and in rock it's more right foot, left hand. I remember always trying to think about my right foot being with the bass player and my left hand being on 2 and 4. The hi-hat is almost associated with the guitar player in rock, whereas in jazz, your right hand really has to be with the bass player. Hopefully, the goal is to get everything in jazz to be a



**Gregg's Setup**

**Drums:** Pearl *MLX* series

- A.** 6 1/2 x 14 brass *Free Floating* snare
- B.** 8 x 8 tom
- C.** 10 x 10 tom
- D.** 10 x 12 tom
- E.** 11 x 13 tom
- F.** 12 x 14 tom
- G.** 12 x 15 tom
- H.** 14 x 16 tom
- I.** 18 x 18 floor tom
- J.** 18 x 20 floor tom
- K.** 36 x 24 bass drum
- L.** 18 x 24 gong tom (mounted behind and up)

**Cymbals:** Zildjian

- 1.** 17" K *China Boy*
- 2.** 15" A Rock *Brilliant* hi-hats
- 3.** 18" A medium crash
- 4.** 10" A splash
- 5.** 19" A medium crash
- 6.** 13" K/Z hi-hats
- 7.** 22" A ping ride

**Hardware:** Pearl remote hi-hat stand for left hi-hat and a DW remote for right hi-hat. Bass drum pedals are DW 5002 *Turbos*, plus two DW *EP-1* trigger pedals. All hardware custom colored by *Colorlife*.

**Heads:** Remo *Myron Grombacher* (customized) head on snare, coated *Ambassadors* on tops of toms with clear *Ambassadors* underneath. Coated *Emperors* on bass drums.

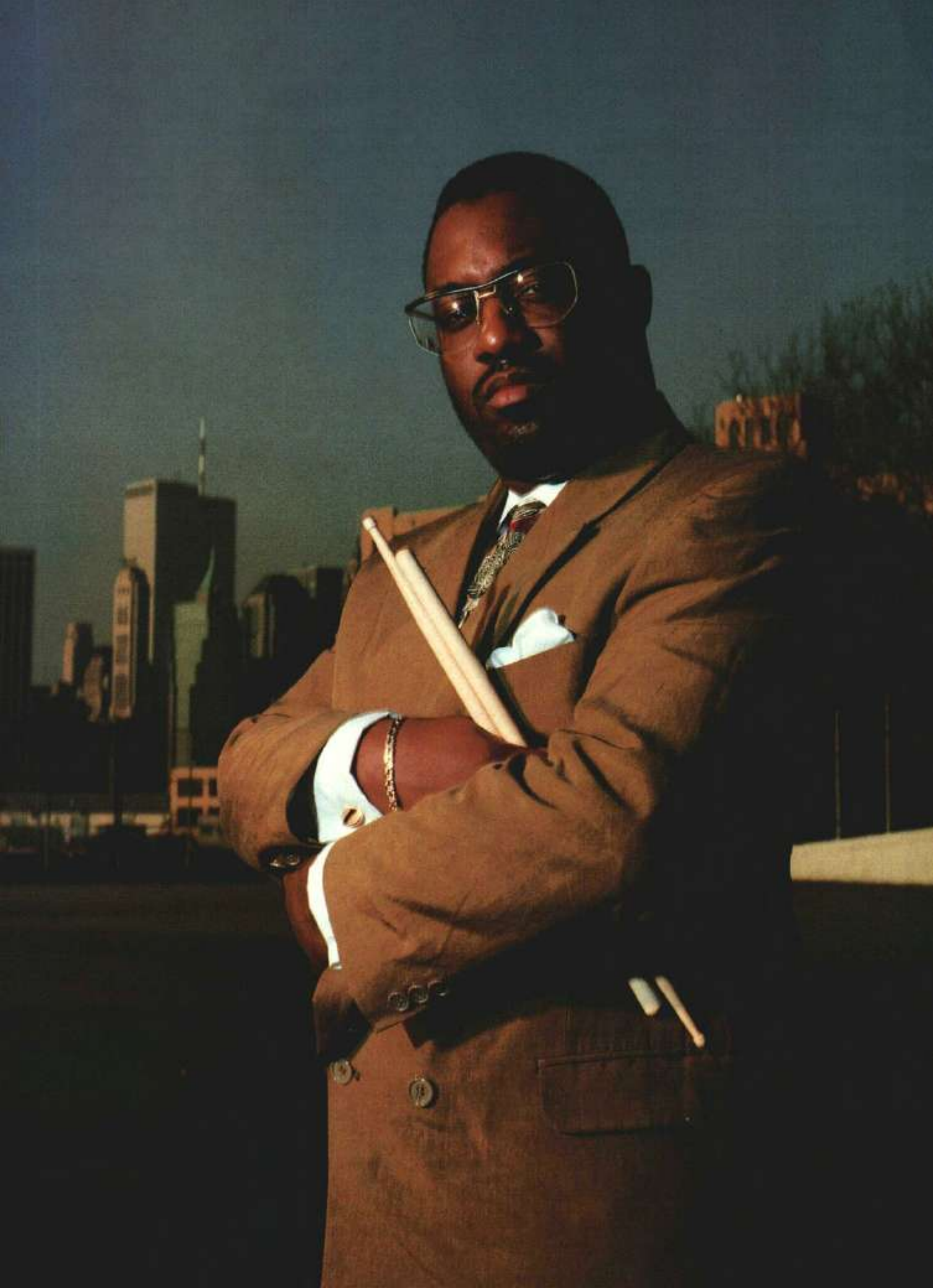
**Sticks:** Vic Firth Gregg *Bissonette* model.

**Electronics:** Two Roland *RM-8* samplers (triggered by pickups in drums).

**Additional Items:** Beato Gloves, lug locks

creative voice and be jamming. But your left hand can be more with the soloist. In rock you can think about the bass drum being with the bass player. There are a lot of different ways to play swing, and I probably should have gotten a lot more into the four-on-the-floor jazz stuff, but I never really

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# Carl Allen

## **Making Choices, Taking Chances, And Always Swinging**

A powerfully built man of 29 years, Carl Allen has the capacity to burn white hot, tattooing the ride cymbal like a swinging demon. Yet he also exhibits uncanny finesse on the kit, whether playing with sticks, brushes, or mallets. A true jazz drummer in every sense of the word, Allen makes choices, takes chances, and helps shape the music every time he hits the bandstand.

Watching him play—perhaps on a gig with Freddie Hubbard, or on a date behind Jackie McLean—you almost get the sense that Allen's hands and feet are struggling to catch up with his racing thoughts. A certain jagged attack on the ivories by the pianist will trigger a tom fill, a swooping *crescendo* by the sax player instinctively suggests a crash cymbal, a behind-the-beat statement from the walking bassist will elicit a laugh and a snare crack. He's constantly engaging in musical conversations with the other bandmembers, reacting to what's in the air...a quintessential living, breathing, *thinking* drummer.

**By Bill Milkowski**  
**Photos By Aldo Mauro**

Allen came to town nine years ago, a brash young cat from the Midwest eager to burn in the Big Apple. While attending William Paterson College in New Jersey, he sought out Hubbard for a gig. As he recalls, "I saw that Freddie was playing at Fat Tuesday's [an intimate Manhattan jazz club], so I went down there to see him. I walked right into the dressing room to talk, and he said he'd call me for an audition. So I stayed up all night for about two weeks, just woodshedding and psyching myself up. But I never did get the call, which is famous for New York."

Rather than becoming frustrated, the determined young drummer continued to pursue the trumpeter. "After he left town I was calling his place in Hollywood a couple of times a week, leaving messages, trying to get some time with him, just bugging him and hustling for the gig."

His persistence eventually paid off. Hubbard hired him a few months later, and Carl's been playing with him off and on ever since. (Allen appears on three Blue Note dates with Hubbard—*Double Take*, *The Eternal Triangle*, featuring the late trumpeter Woody Shaw, and *Life Flight*.) And it wasn't long before other musicians around New York picked up on Carl's swinging, interactive approach to the drums. He has worked with tenor saxophonist George Coleman, appeared on two Columbia albums with saxophonist Donald Harrison and trumpeter Terence Blanchard (*Black Pearl* and *Crystal Star*), and recently joined the Jackie McLean Quintet (appearing on the alto sax master's Dynasty album on Triloka Records).

Recently, the in-demand drummer made his debut as a bandleader, cutting two albums for the Japanese Alfa Records label. *Dreamboat*, with young trumpet sensation Roy Hargrove, alto saxophonist Kenny Garrett, bassist Ira Coleman, and pianist Donald Brown, was recorded on March 24 and 25 of 1989. *Picadilly Square*, his follow-up, featuring Hargrove, Coleman, Brown, alto sax demon Vincent Herring, and guest Freddie Hubbard, was recorded in January of 1990 and was released the following April. Both albums are marked by a high degree of interplay and daring improvisation, and also feature a few Carl Allen compositions.

Carl is always on the move, either performing, teaching, or giving clinics. We talked to him the day before he embarked on a tour of Israel with Freddie Hubbard.

**BM:** How did you get the gig with Jackie McLean?

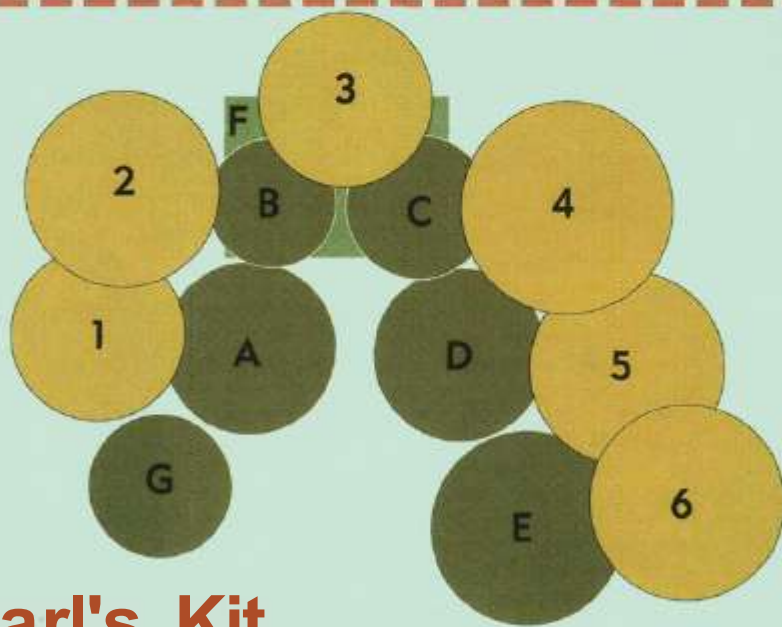
**CA:** I think the first gig I did with him was July of '86. I was back in Wisconsin doing a summer camp in Green Bay, and somehow he tracked me down there. He had a gig in New York at a now-defunct club called The Whipporwill. We did the first night, and then it closed. And we did some other gigs soon after. The gigs with him have been kind of sporadic since then, but they're picking up now.

**BM:** What was it like rehearsing with him the first time? What kind of a bandleader is he?

**CA:** He's a very mature bandleader in that he gives you space to play. He'll give you an idea of what he wants, but he gives you the respect to deal with it. Some bandleaders will tell you what they want, and they want everything played exactly the same way, as if they hired a drum machine or something. But Jackie's not that way. It's about swinging and having fun. That way you get a chance to check out for yourself what works and what doesn't.

**BM:** What do you think Jackie likes about your playing?

**CA:** He says my playing reminds him of Art Blakey at times. And other times he says some Max and some Philly Joe come out, which is, of course, a very high compliment. But he says he hears me developing some things on my own, which is good to hear, particularly coming from someone like him. Jackie's



## Carl's Kit

**Drums:** Ludwig *Classic*

- A. 6 1/2 x 14 snare
- B. 8 x 12 tom
- C. 9 x 13 tom
- D. 14 x 14 floor tom
- E. 16 x 16 floor tom
- F. 16 x 18 bass drum
- G. 3 x 13 piccolo snare

**Hardware:** All Ludwig, except for a *Black Max* bass drum pedal.

**Heads:** Evans. **Sticks:** Cappella Celebrity Series *Carl Allen* model.

**Cases:** Protec/tor.

**Cymbals:** Sabian (all HH models)

- 1. 14" hi-hats
- 2. 20" *Classic* light ride
- 3. 16" crash
- 4. 22" *Sound Control* medium ride
- 5. 19" crash/ride
- 6. 18" China type



the cat who got Tony Williams started and had Jack DeJohnette and many other great cats in his band. He says he thinks I have some fire, which he likes. He likes a lot of fire and a lot of movement under him, something that's gonna push him. Jackie always says, "Man, whatever you do, please don't start playing like an old man." He just likes for it to be fresh, something new—swinging all the time, which I try to do.

**BM:** What I like about your playing is that you throw a lot of ideas out from phrase to phrase, from bar to bar. Some people think swinging is just laying on the ride cymbal. But it seems like you break up the beat in unusual ways with the snare and hi-hat, and by throwing in comments on the toms.

**CA:** Well, I guess that comes from the fact that as a kid I never heard drums "as drums." Although I adored and respected all the great drummers, I never wanted to play like a drummer. I wanted to play tenor saxophone at first. My oldest brother played drums, so I just picked it up from him. But when I play I try to get things from other instruments. Thelonious Monk had a certain way of playing that I really like. Monk played piano like drums, in a way. Dexter Gordon had a certain way of playing that I hear being applied to the drums. Same with Miles Davis—and so did Hank Mobley. And I'm picking up on that. I try to hear melody and movement so that I can help shape tunes.

I don't like to be predictable. I don't want cats to say, "Yeah, well, here's beat 1, so I know you're gonna hit a crash cymbal there." I get a kick out of being unpredictable, particularly when cats play like they're dependent on the drummer all the time to outline the form. I think everybody should be mature enough to know where 1 is on their own. I mean, my job is not to babysit you. It takes a certain amount of maturity to deal with this music.

And maturity is responsibility. So the thing I try to do is keep it fresh, keep something exciting happening.

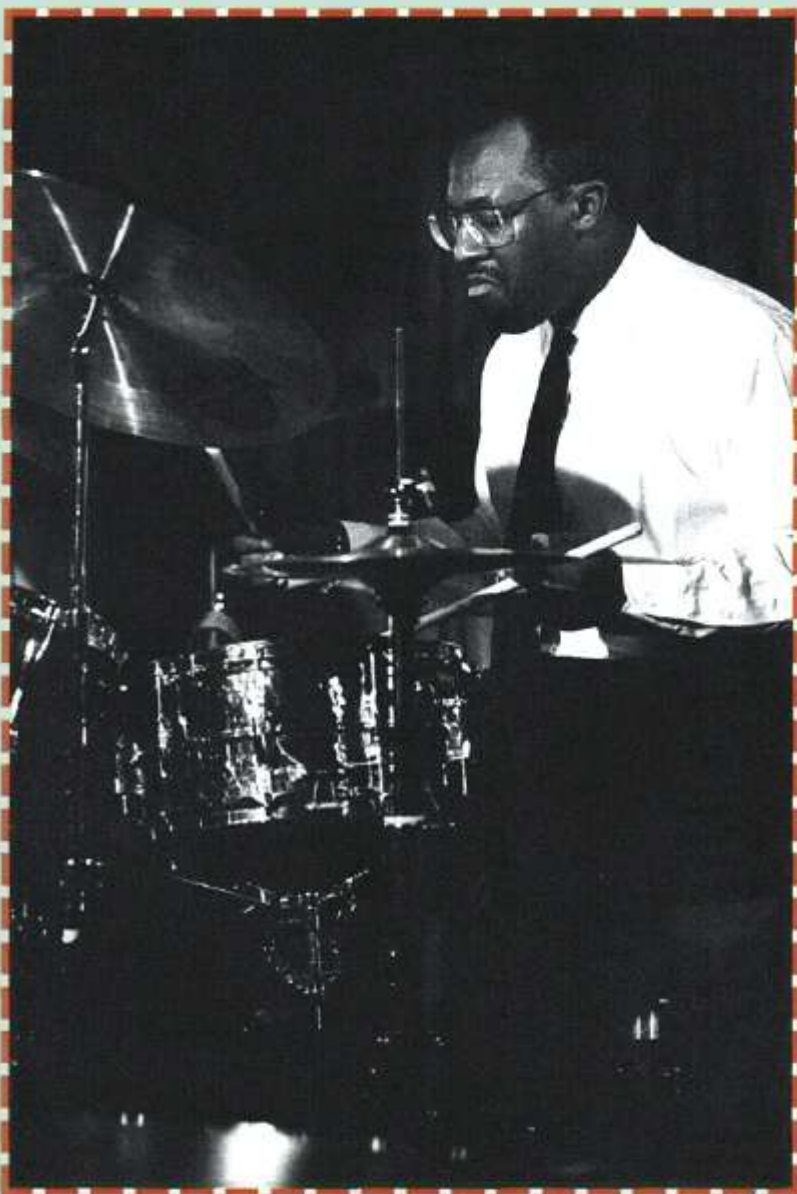
**BM:** I saw you do things that were very subtle but that made the piano player's head turn. He'd pick up on a fill as if you were comping a chord on the drumset.

**CA:** For me it's about trying to get that forward motion happening. And at the same time it's about what you play internally as well, not just externally. For instance, when I play, I'm always playing against something in my mind—whether it's a bass line or a piano player comping or something. So I try to create this ongoing surface, this form of communication.

Sometimes it's cool to just play the cymbal beat with a little bass drum on the bottom. Because, again, space is very important too. You know, I just like to be unpredictable. I don't want to play the same stuff all the time.

**BM:** About your playing with Freddie Hubbard, do you find that you're taking more chances now than when you first started playing with him five years ago?

**CA:** I think so, because I'm starting to feel more comfortable



about just trying to play and trying to swing. When I was younger, I was just trying to find out who I was, trying to establish some things in myself. So as I got a little older—a little bit more experienced—I had the confidence to play more and to play differently.

When somebody calls you for a gig for the first time, that could be an accident. But when they keep calling you it's like a vote of confidence. So after having played with people like George Coleman or Jackie or Freddie or Randy Weston, and having them dig what I'm doing, it makes me think, "Well, maybe I'm doing something right."

It's hard to find your own voice on an instrument. There's a tendency to do what's popular, but sometimes what's popular is not you. I can't just do what's popular. I have to play what I hear and feel. And sometimes that means you're going to be an outcast. You know, Monk was an outcast for a long time. Elvin, Trane...all these cats were outcasts. Not to say that I'm on their level at all, but the point is that when I look at them as examples it gives me confidence to say, "Well, it's alright to

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# REMEMBERING TINY KAHN



By Burt Korall

Photos courtesy  
Rutgers Institute  
of Jazz Studies

composer/ arranger indicates that he certainly would have continued to have a creative, diverse, fruitful career in jazz—and very possibly in other areas of music as well.

His loss was most deeply felt in New York, where he did some of his best work. But its impact extended throughout the country and to Europe, where his recordings with Stan Getz, Chubby Jackson, and Charlie Barnet certainly had more than a passing effect.

Unfortunately, I never met Tiny Kahn, even though I was deeply into music in New York during his key years (the mid-to-late 1940s through the early '50s). But I did have friends in bands with which he was a factor, both as a drummer and writer of music. The word on the scene back then was that Kahn was someone with something very real and meaningful to give to music. And not only did he have talent. He was humorous, sensitive, and kind—a person liked by everyone. This

Though he passed away 38 years ago at the age of 29, drummer/composer/arranger/pianist/vibraphonist/humorist Norman "Tiny" Kahn

still remains lodged in the memories of those who knew him. A musician who gave indications of greatness before a massive heart attack

cut his life short, Kahn left behind a legacy of recordings and broadcasts that document his excellence. His work as a drummer and



musician didn't have an evil bone in his rather large body.

Kahn loved music with an almost compulsive intensity; it was everything to him and consumed his waking hours. A natural talent who had little formal training outside of instruction with drum teachers Freddie Albright and Henry Adler, Tiny just seemed to know how to do things in a manner that worked particularly well. His drumming, though not the envy of those who looked only for technical wizardry, *did* make bands sound better than they ever had before. His time was perfect—right down the center. Not tense, nor too laid back. He has frequently been described as a "comfortable" drummer. Without moving into the foreground or making an issue of himself in any way, he inspired his colleagues to play well, to give the best of themselves. He had his own sound and techniques on drums. But more about that later.

Kahn the writer provided music that was exciting to play, to hear, and to think about. Often his compositions and arrangements practically played themselves. Musicians remember how easy they were to perform, that they felt right for all the instruments and never failed to make a comment. Most important they mirrored Kahn's thoughtfulness and spontaneity, and his concern for expressing ideas in a manner that was economical (but not over-simplified) and *swinging*.

Kahn had music within him. As he grew older and had opportunities to share his musical ideas with others, he progressively became a great source to the many

musicians who were drawn to him. He was a leader without ever desiring to be one. He set an example when it came to playing, writing, and living. While others turned to drugs, drink, and an underground life, he pursued the musical muse, his only excess being his great capacity for food—which, ultimately, had a lot to do with ending his life.

Many musicians and fans speak in laudatory terms about Tiny as a drummer, others feel his writing ability was what made him so sin-

son indicate he was on intimate terms with the essentials of music and life."

For much of the enlightenment that is brought to this essay, I am indebted to several of my friends in music who were close to Kahn. Here are their thoughts of the man.

**TERRY GIBBS** (band-leader, award-winning vibraphonist): "From the time I was six until age eighteen, when I went into the army, Tiny and I were together almost constantly. We lived

end of one evening—there were maybe 10 people in the place—I asked Tiny to play vibes. He got into 'I Can't Get Started With You.' I have never heard anything more melodic in my life. He played the prettiest things. At that time, all he'd had was six months of study on drums with Freddie Albright.

"Tiny was melodic even when he played drums. From the beginning, he had his own way of doing things. I remember we both auditioned for the same bands around Brooklyn. Most of the leaders wanted a drummer to solo, to be able to do the flashy routine on 'Sing, Sing, Sing,' using the technical approach that Gene Krupa had popularized with Benny Goodman. Well, Tiny didn't have much technique, so I got a lot of the jobs. He just didn't want to play that way. He liked Buddy Rich, but the more subtle Jo Jones and Sid Catlett were his men. When he auditioned for the bands that played the hip Count Basie stocks, it was an entirely different story. He ran away with the thing. Basie was his groove. Tiny didn't do much; he just kept fantastic time. When a fill came along, he did what was necessary and knocked everybody out.

"There was a lot of genius in Tiny. He could do so many things easily. When I was in the army, the leader of the dance band with which I played couldn't buy the 'Jump The Blues Away' and 'Wiggle Woogie' Basie stocks anywhere. I told Tiny about this and he just copied all the music off the recordings and sent it to me. And that was an 18-year-old guy who had never taken a lesson!

"Another thing: When I

"Tiny was the  
originator of  
*musical modern*  
drumming."  
-- Red Rodney

gular, still others recall his unschooled but unforgettable piano playing. However, his friends, musical colleagues, and fans generally agree that Kahn was one of a special few who come along all too rarely. In the words of composer/valve trombonist/educator Bob Brookmeyer, "As I grew older, got to know Mel Lewis, heard a lot of music, and came to know more about it, I began to realize what a monstrously gifted musician Tiny Kahn was. The understated quality of his playing and writing and the way he was as a per-

in neighboring apartments in Brooklyn and had music in common. I have to make one thing clear immediately: Tiny was way ahead of everyone, certainly harmonically. He could pick up any instrument—bass fiddle, guitar, cello, piano—and make more musical sense than anyone, just by ear. I'll give you an example. We both were working at a club on 52nd Street in New York called The Troubadour. I believe the year was 1947. He was with Georgie Auld's band; I was playing with guitarist Bill D'Arango's group. At the

came home on furlough as World War II was winding down, Tiny hipped me to what Charlie Parker and Dizzy Gillespie were doing on 52nd Street. He understood the new music and explained it to me in detail. He knew every note and what to do with it. He would sit at the piano and play complete tunes for me, in some cases including all the solos. Because he didn't have much technique at the piano, he slowed things down a bit. But it was really something that he almost instinctively understood what Bird and Dizzy and that first great bebop band were creating and how the music was structured and related to the overall development of jazz.

"There are so many Tiny Kahn stories. When we were kids, we both liked to play baseball with the other fellows. Tiny once hit a ball over the center fielder's head and was thrown out at first base. Another time, he was the catcher on our team. There was a guy at third base who taunted him. He kept yelling: 'Watch out Fats, I'm coming home!' You couldn't call Tiny Fats or Fatso. He'd get terribly angry. This guy really got on his case. The Fatso business kept on until the ball was hit somewhere and the guy flew home. As he was sliding in, Tiny got the ball from the outfield and tagged him—in the head, knocking him out. This was so unlike him. But

he could only take so much teasing about how he looked."

**IRV KLUGER** (drummer with many leading bands, including Artie Shaw, Stan Kenton, and Boyd Raeburn): "I met Tiny when we were teenagers. I was rehearsing

sessions in New York City): "Tiny made such a deep impression on me that I think of him very often. He played in my big band in 1939. He had just started on drums—he was 15. The feeling he created in the band was sensational. I watched him grow through

the two- or four-bar openings. He played just enough in the right way. How was his time? The rhythm flowed and you felt beautiful. Tiny became the best big band drummer around. He was influenced by several drummers, but certainly by Shadow Wilson, who played so



Georgie Auld's band at the Three Deuces, 1946, with Curly Russell, George Wellington, Serge Chaloff, Tiny Kahn, and Red Rodney.

with saxophonist Frankie Socolow in the cellar of his house in Brooklyn. Tiny developed very rapidly as a drummer. He just busted out. He had an exquisite sense of sound and dynamics. He clearly was heavily influenced by Jo Jones. He used a wide open bass drum, which made necessary good foot control. His cymbal sound approximated a roar, making for a horizontal line of time. Tiny could play with anybody and always sounded good."

**AL (YOUNG) EPSTEIN** (saxophonist with Benny Goodman, Georgie Auld, Buddy Rich, Chubby Jackson, and other bands, sideman on many recording ses-

sions, particularly in bands where he was free to swing in the Basie style that he loved.

"We worked together in 1947 at the Troubadour in New York in Georgie Auld's band, which included Red Rodney [trumpet], Gene Zanoni [alto saxophone], Serge Chaloff [baritone saxophone], Jack Carmen [trombone], George Handy [piano], and Jimmy Johnson [bass]. The best experience we had together? The Chubby Jackson band in 1949. It was the happiest group. All the players were close. Tiny wrote most of the charts and whipped the band from the drums. He had a way of playing *perfect* fills. They fit as if they had been tailored for

well in Count Basie's band. What was Tiny's secret? He knew bands from the inside and brought to them what they needed. He was a composer at the drums. You could always tell it was Tiny sitting there when you heard a large or small band."

**HENRY JEROME** (band-leader and record producer): "I had a progressive jazz orchestra in 1944 - '45—perhaps the first of its kind. It reflected the changes taking place in jazz around that time. Dizzy Gillespie and Charlie Parker were our primary influences. I had a bunch of great young musicians in the band. I was involved with Tiny when he was just beginning as a jazz



musician. He hung around my band. We were at Childs Paramount on Broadway for a long period of time. It was the only gig we could get; theaters and other clubs thought we were too far out. The guys in the band just adored Tiny. And he loved what we were doing. My musicians provided incentive for him to improve as a drummer. Though he wasn't taken too seriously at first, Tiny did come on and became one of the great ones.

"Tiny was so pure and such an admirer of the music that was changing from swing to bop. He was tasty and knew what to do when it came to the new music: where to put fills, where to lay back, where to make accents and push the beat. He was not a heavy drummer. You *felt* Tiny. Irv Kluger and Stan Levey were heavier, more dominant. Tiny just played, and everybody fell into his groove.

"His writing had its own flavor as well. Tiny brought in about a dozen charts for us to play. They combined the rhythmic feeling of Basie with adventurous, contemporary ideas. Everyone in the band enjoyed his arrangements.

"I have nothing but good memories of Tiny Kahn. He was the sweetest person, a truly nice individual who helped get something important started in music in the 1940s and early '50s."

**JACK EAGLE** (trumpeter with a number of bands, including Henry Jerome, Georgie Auld, Jerry Wald, and Bobby Sherwood, now a comedian and TV personality): "Tiny took Stan Levey's place in Henry Jerome's

band. Nobody really expected Tiny to get the job. But Henry decided to give him a shot. Tiny had been sitting in with the band. Levey, who helped originate the bop language for drums, had a big influence on Tiny. For a period of time he sounded like Stan; he mimicked him on

played with too many big groups, with the exception of the neighborhood units in Brooklyn. He had to deal with top, young musicians and challenging circumstances, like nightly coast-to-coast broadcasts. He had to produce. And he did because he wanted so much

of several drummers who emphasized *musical* values. Kenny Clarke, Max Roach, Shelly Manne, Shadow Wilson, Irv Kluger, and certainly Kahn insisted the drummer was a *musician* and should behave like one.

Kahn told Pat Harris in the April 7, 1950 issue of *down beat*: "A drummer today has to do more than keep time. He has to know enough about music and what other musicians in the group are doing to act as a complement to the band.

That Kahn was a thinker is further validated by Red Rodney, with whom Tiny worked and recorded. Jazz historians warmly remember the Keynote sessions (Red Rodney and the Be Boppers, January 1947).

**RED RODNEY** (trumpeter with Gene Krupa, Georgie Auld, Claude Thornhill, Woody Herman, Charlie Ventura, Charlie Parker, and his own groups): "I came to New York early in 1947 after leaving the Krupa band, and I almost immediately came across Tiny. I met him and a number of other new Brooklyn jazz players. The first time Tiny and I played together I immediately sensed he was something special. The guy didn't have very good hands or feet. But he swung like mad. I had never heard anyone swing like that before. Tiny had great time and a drumming concept all his own. His sound was distinctive, and he adapted it for each soloist. In fact he made a point of adjusting his sound to each band with which he played. According to Tiny, every band called for something different. He also taught me that the drummer

"Tiny would musically get underneath you and lift you up. He's one of my favorite drummers of all time."

—Stan Getz

the arrangements he had heard him play. But when the new charts came in, Tiny had to develop his own ideas and techniques and find inspiration within himself. It took a little while, but he got with it, taking responsibility for shlepping and stimulating this 13-piece band. He went from having difficulty maintaining the time through an up-tempo thing to becoming smooth, polished, and exciting—a "comfortable" player with whom musicians enjoyed working.

"I must admit that the Jerome band was stressful for Tiny at first. He hadn't

to play well and please himself and the other people in the band.

"Tiny kept the Jerome band feeling good. His playing helped and so did his humor. He was a real funny guy—a great 'laugher' and a great audience. We used to hang out and trade jokes, mostly dialect stories. Everyone got a kick out of him. He even looked funny with his little bebop hat, goatee, and large body. But there was so much more to him than what he showed you on the surface."

Kahn was part of a wave of change in music. He was one

# Drum Techs: Working

**H**e is the unsung hero, the difference between smooth sailing and rough waters, the person who makes it possible for the drummer to confidently walk on stage and do his job. He gets no applause from the audience, but he is entitled to share the drummer's praise each night. They say behind every good man there is a good woman. Well, behind every good drummer there is a good tech.

The four techs I spoke with—Jeff Chonis, Jeff Ocheltree, Brad Marsh, and Paul Jamieson—all were drummers who fell into their jobs as techs quite by accident. One didn't wish to weather the storms it would take to establish a career as a player. One admitted to the fact that he hated the practicing and rehearsing. Another didn't have the dedication required. Still another wasn't making a living when tech-dom fell into his lap.

Like millions of others, for Jeff Chonis it was the magic of the Beatles that ignited the spark. He could never imagine, watching *The Ed Sullivan Show*, that 25 years later he would be working with Ringo Starr on his most recent tour.

An offer to work with Tony Brock of the Babys changed Chonis's career direction from drummer to tech. He was qualified only in that he was meticulous about his own equipment and open-minded to learning. The lessons really began when he hooked up with Myron Grombacher through Pat Benatar's then-producer Keith Olson (who had also produced the Babys).

"I've done four tours and five records with Pat Benatar, and Myron was excellent training for me, because he's a demanding guy to work for," Jeff says. "Having that training, everybody else I work with now seems easy. What Myron taught me most importantly is that it's worth it to put out a lot of extra effort in what you're doing, because it's going to pay off in the long run. What I'm talking about specifically are the four different setups we did for the four tours I did. We created a different kind of drumset that nobody had seen before. Instead of just ordering factory finishes

and cymbal stands and putting them up on stage, we went a little further. We did a custom finish on the drumkit and designed a custom bar system to hold the drums. People would come up after the show and, of course, compliment Myron on his playing. But they'd also mention something about the drumkit.

"The first tour was the tiger-stripe camouflage," Jeff explains, "and then we did the Japanese kit, which a lot of people took pictures of, so it got in some magazines. Then we did the *Seven The Hard Way* tour. That monstrosity had a 12'x12' riser and some set pieces, some of them shaped like sevens. There were bars in between each set piece, and then all the drums and cymbals were hung from that. There was a huge seven in the back that we hung the gong from.

"Myron is a very creative guy, and a lot of the ideas were his," Chonis continues. "He'd say, 'I want to do this,' and I'd get the mechanics of it and make it fly. I would put together the nuts and bolts so it would hold up under his playing and so it could be packed up every night and taken to the next city to be set up again. After that drumkit, we scaled down a little

bit for the tattoo kit, which was the last one we did for the *Wide Awake In Dreamland* tour. On that one, Myron had the idea to do the finish in fleshstone and then get pictures of tattoos of different people he knew and have them copied on the drums."

For those Benatar tours, work began two months prior to leaving home, during which time shells were ordered, a painter was secured to do the finishing, and risers were built—not to mention the simple ordering of spares and the designing of road cases.

"If there are electronics involved, again you have to go to the drummer and find out exactly what it is he wants to do. Are there sequencers? Does he want to have acoustic drums with pads and effects? It's not just cymbal stands and drums anymore. The last tour Myron and I did together, we had a



Jeff Chonis (right) has applied his tech skills with Ringo Starr (shown above), Myron Grombacher, Harvey Mason, Jim Keltner, and many others.



# With The Superstars

BY ROBYN FLANS

whole rack of samplers, mixers, drum machines, and effects—so as a tech you find yourself sitting back there with the rack loading discs, turning knobs, mixing.... I played the drum machine on the five songs where there was a sequence. I got cues from Myron. If I didn't stop it when I was supposed to, the band would have stopped and the drum machine would have kept going, and I would have looked like a jerk. Fortunately that never happened.

"There's never a dull moment being on stage with Myron," says Jeff. "There's always something to do. The triggering thing is definitely not an exact science. And every drummer plays differently, so one set of triggers may work for one guy but not for someone else. Keeping up with new technology is like a tech's homework. I go to music stores and NAMM shows, or if the companies that make these things are local, I'll go to demonstrations.

"Once we start putting things together for a tour," Chonis continues, "I'm on salary. A lot of times, when I'm spending time learning a machine, I'm being paid for that week. Maybe I'm spending a lot more hours than I have to to get that paycheck, but if you know electronics you can command a higher salary in this field. There are fewer guys who know the electronics, so you're a commodity if you know it."

After the production rehearsals, where they've honed down the setup, ordered the parts—and if they are traveling abroad, taken care of the carnet (a detailed inventory of equipment for customs purposes)—the crew hits the road. While there are certainly the standard functions of a tech—setting up, changing heads, tearing down, etc.—the variables within the job change from situation to situation. Most techs, however, will put a fresh set of tom and snare heads on for each show.

Jeff Ocheltree, who has worked with the likes of Billy Cobham, John Bonham, Mark Craney, Tris Imboden, Denny Seiwell, Andy Newmark, Aynsley

Dunbar, John Ferraro, Michael Shrieve, Steve Smith, Denny Fongheiser, and Gary Husband, says that when he teched for Fongheiser, he'd change the heads before soundcheck—and sometimes even *after* soundcheck. "The two snare drums I built Denny were 3 1/2x12 piccolos, and he would hit them so hard that a new head would have to go on before the end of soundcheck," Ocheltree recalls. "During the show we'd either switch them, or I'd tune them up a lot higher than usual so they'd be a little more resilient.

"I do the soundcheck if possible," Jeff continues. "If you really know the drummer's habits and what the kit can do, if you really work well with the other people who do the sound, and if you know your miking, the drummer can just come in and do the show. If you're hesitant or insecure about him or what he does, you may not be able to do the soundcheck for him, which is a disappointment. But sometimes you can't. The drummer has to come in and sit down, and he'll hit the drum a lot different than you were hitting it. You've got to hit the drums the way he does, and you really have to pay attention to him. When you change the heads, you have to look to see where he's hitting that drum, and you have to keep that in mind every day. Denny hit that drum in the center every time."



Jeff Ocheltree (right, with Niclas Sigevall of the Electric Boys) has teched for many years, working for Billy Cobham, John Bonham, Andy Newmark, and Steve Smith, among others.

# Drum Techs: Working

Ocheltree cut his tech teeth with Billy Cobham of the Mahavishnu Orchestra in 1973. According to Jeff, it was a fantastic learning experience. "He's not afraid to let you try things," Jeff explains. "He lets you take risks. If you want to build something for him, he'll let you do that. If you want to modify something, he'll let you do that, too. He gave me so many opportunities to get experience. I've never met anyone like him before. He's a phenomenal player, a really neat person to be around, and an educator."

Ocheltree says his Cobham experience allowed him to be in on the ground floor of the trend of bringing drums up front on stage—as well as in the mix. Also through Cobham, Ocheltree met the late Al Duffy, with whom he built the first gong drum and began customizing early on. Ocheltree also met John Bonham through Cobham, and he proceeded to work a year and a half for the Zeppelin drummer.

"Cobham played a lot of European tours, and Bonham came to see him at one particular gig. I was introduced to him, and I took him out on stage to watch Billy. I got the job because I built Bonham a custom snare drum. He said, 'I'll never play this, but I appreciate your building it. Why don't you come to work for me?' He had a tech who just didn't seem to have a clue about drums, but they kept him around because he was a clown. When it came time for him to set up the drums, though, Bonham had to redo everything. Bonham really loved playing, so he was really into tuning.

"Working with him was pretty incredible at first, because it was like walking on eggshells all the time," Ocheltree continues. "There were too many people involved with that band that were kind of scary. It was a real attitude of, 'Just set the damn things up, buddy, the drummer takes care of the rest'—real abrasive and sometimes really demeaning. It was a hard road to go.

"In '76 I did my first tour with him in Europe," Jeff continues. "It was a day-to-day struggle, because I wanted to spend a lot of time working with the drums—cleaning, changing heads, tuning—and these guys couldn't figure it out. Bonham liked to goof around a lot, but he took playing very seriously, so there was a real fine line between when you would goof off and when you got down to business. He was a fascinating drummer for me to work for, because I went from this rock/fusion drummer—who was well-schooled in every way—to Bonham, who was self-taught and had an incredibly uncanny way of doing grooves. But he was smooth.

"John had a theory like mine: When you're playing with a big band

with lots of amplification and you can't depend on the sound guys to take care of you, tune everything higher than usual. So we had a 26" kick, and I'd tune it up a little higher than usual. I always had the snare drum—a brass chrome Ludwig—cranked way up; in fact, sometimes it was too much for him. But Bonham actually had notes he was hearing in the tuning. In the old days, people didn't seem to hear notes. Billy Cobham also hears notes.

"What I liked about Bonham was he was real attuned to what kind of sound he wanted from his drumkit, whereas jazz drummers seem to slip into a mold. I just got finished working for John Ferraro with Larry Carlton, and he's a neat guy and a good player. He bought one of my drums that is real loud, and he started playing differently. So I started tuning it differently, and he loved it. Now he's on the road with Carlton, and they're playing heavy rock-type stuff. So there is an attitude that goes into tuning. There's also an attitude that goes into how you approach taking care of the drums. Most people never clean drums or polish them or redo the bearing edges on them."

The tech's day is a long one. Jeff Chonis says that in addition to teching for Grombacher, on the last two Benatar tours he served as stage manager as well, and it nearly killed him. His day began at 7:00 A.M. and finished by 1:00 or 2:00 the next morning. "And if you're on a big show," Jeff says, "you have to start earlier and stay up later—like with someone like Bon Jovi, Motley Crue, or Madonna, a crew that has more than eight trucks. Madonna had 13."

"It is a lot of long hours, but it's important to be positive," Ocheltree relays. "It gets real dragged out at times. We [the Electric Boys] did a video recently in an abandoned factory. It was 110° in there with no air conditioning even in the motor home. It was hard to keep positive, but as soon as we accepted that it would be that way all day long, it was, 'Well, what can we do? Let's have some fun.' Luckily we all have a sense of humor, because that's what gets you through.

"A big difficulty is you've got two different types of tours," he continues. "You've



Brad Marsh was the drum tech in the Prince camp, working with both Bobby Z and Sheila E., as well as other artists, such as Steve Ferrone and Chester Thompson.



# With The Superstars

got the big-budget tours with drummers who have endorsements, where you've got everything you want. It's consistent every night because you work with the same sound people, the same microphones, etc. Then you have a tour like we're on now with the Electric Boys. They're focused, young, and extremely talented, which is why Herbie Herbert manages them and Atlantic Records is behind them. But we're on a club tour. We're dealing with crummy sound systems, rotten clubs, and horrible situations, but you have to make the best of it. I demand that if the band can afford it, we at least rent or lease the same mic's. But it can really wear you out.

Each tech has gone through his own unique experiences, including a list of nightmare situations. "In the past, you didn't have all these neat gizmos where you could lock in all the cymbal stands and legs of toms," Ocheltree recalls, "so you had to do whatever you could do to make sure the things wouldn't fall. The biggest nightmare I had was when Billy Cobham hit one of his double kicks so hard it flew off the stage. I didn't have it anchored well enough. That was embarrassing because I had to trot on out there, retrieve the drum, and try to get it back in there. One night at the Bottom Line he cracked spurs right off a kick drum, and I had to replace them while he was playing. But I'd love it when he'd break a head, because it was kind of exciting to change it while he was going around the drums.

"One time in Japan, Gary Husband told me he didn't know about the pedals he was using. He said, 'Somehow I just don't think the springs will hold.'

I said, 'Oh no, those springs will hold on well, don't worry.' He was playing a solo when both pedals fell apart. The springs came off and I couldn't find them. I was down there with a flashlight, and he was using the sticks on the kick drums right by my head."

"You don't want things to break down or fail on stage in the middle of a show," Chonis says. "That is a nightmare. A bass drum head breaking is a major nightmare. When your sampler crashes and you see nothing on your screen but bad data—that's a nightmare. There are so many things that can go wrong that they're too numerous to mention. What I try to do is plan well and have a

back-up plan. Just things as basic as snare drums—snare heads break, or snare triggers break. So I have a back-up snare with a trigger on it all tuned and ready to go. The kick drum pedal is another one. Right next to me, I have to have another kick drum pedal identical to the one the drummer is using. As far as electronics, I keep three sets of discs. I've got one with the equipment, I've got a second one in my briefcase, and then I give the third to somebody else on the crew for safekeeping."

Brad Marsh has worked stints with Steve Ferrone, Bubba Bryant (both with George Benson), and Jellybean Johnson of the Time, and he spent ten years with Prince. Speaking of Prince, one night during the Purple One's regime... "The power cut right in the middle of a song, and the band panicked. But it was no big deal. Everything stopped, of course, including the drum machine. The look on [drummer] Bobby Z's face when it happened! I haven't really had any catastrophes, though. I just make sure everything is working before the drummer goes up, and I pray a lot. On acoustic drums, I just make sure everything is in good working order and the heads aren't near breaking. I have an extra snare drum and an extra bass drum pedal. If I see that a bass drum head is near breaking, I won't take a chance. I may only have five seconds left, but I'll change it so I can rest easy. If I look confident, then he can walk up and see that I'm not panicking."

Marsh says that injuries and health can play a part, too, because you can't call in sick in the teching business. "You can call in dead, and that's about it," Brad laughs while on the road teching for Chester Thompson. "I fell out of my bunk on the bus one day. I was getting up around 4:00 in the morning from my top bunk, and I slipped and fell flat on my back. I couldn't

continued on page 105



Paul Jamieson (left, with Connie Jamieson and Phil Collins) is a tech-superstar in his own right, having worked with many top-name artists, including Jeff Porcaro, Gerry Brown, Russ Kunkel, Dennis Chambers, and Manu Katche, just to name a few.



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**TAMA**

# Pearl Prestige Studio Drumkit

by Adam Budofsky

**Birch makes the difference here. Pearl's Prestige Studio Kit nicely balances control and guts in a very sharp package.**

The main thing that separates Pearl's *Prestige Studio* kit from many of its contemporaries (and what gives it its unique sound) is its shell construction: six plies of high-density birch, internally sealed with an "advanced finishing technique." Pearl's literature states that these elements join forces to provide a drum with increased high-end attack and low-end depth, with a slightly reduced midrange presence. Pearl isn't lying. These are very sweet-sounding drums, made even more attractive by some nifty hardware. Let's take a closer look and listen.

## To The Eye

Pearl sent us a five-piece kit, the *BLX-22D-5* model, in their Bordeaux Red finish. Mixed reviews on the color from all concerned. I liked it, others didn't. Other available finishes are piano black, coral red, arctic white, sequoia red, and sheer blue, so there's a good chance that one of these is bound to tickle your fancy. I can't account for taste, but I can definitely say that the finish was very nicely applied, with no visible blemishes.

Drum sizes included a 16x22 bass drum, 10x12 and 11x13 mounted toms, and a 16x16 floor tom. Two snare drums were delivered with our test kit: a 6 1/2x14 *S814-D Free Floating* steel snare (which

comes standard with this kit), and a 6 1/2 x14 *Custom Classic* maple snare. The two toms had six lugs, the floor tom had eight, and the bass drum and snares had ten.

The toms, floor tom, and bass drum were fitted with clear *Pinstripes* on top; the bottoms of the toms and floor tom had clear Pearl *WS* heads, and the bass drum came with a black Pearl logo head on the front without a hole. Snares had coated *Ambassador* batters and clear snare-side *Ambassadors* on the bottom. All the drums came with Pearl's flanged *Super Hoops*. Bearing edges were 45° and for the most part clean and sharp. (More on this later.)

Plastic isolators were fitted between hardware, badges, and ventholes and the shells for protection and to decrease potential rattling. Wooden bass drum hoops were finished in the same color as the drums. (A metal shield protecting the hoop from the bass drum pedal clamp is a feature that should be standard with every kit, as it is here.)

Also included with the package were a cymbal stand and a boom stand from Pearl's 850 series, an *H-950* model hi-hat stand, a *P880* bass drum pedal, and an *S950 WS* snare drum stand. Rack and floor toms and the bass drum were fitted with high-tension type lugs, and all hardware was doubled-braced with the exception of the hi-hat.

## To The Ear

Starting from the ground up, the bass drum was most impressive. After a little experimentation, I settled on pressing a pillow snugly against the batter head and fitting my own coated *Ambassador* head with a 6" hole on the front. (I did the latter for two reasons: One, the *Ambassador* has my band's logo on it; two, the hole enabled me to fiddle with the pillow inside.) The front head was allowed to ring on its own, and lugs were loosely tightened. With this setup the drum put out a strong punch with a good tone. And it was louder than I expected it would be. Apparently Pearl's birch shell and interi-

or finish combine to do just what Pearl claims they should.

The theory seemed to hold with the *Prestige Studio's* toms, also. After a little agonizing over tuning each tom with itself, a very nice, warm tone was eventually achieved with good punch and attack, and ample sustain. One would suspect that these drums would really benefit by the RIMS system, because they seemed to lose a good deal of their sustain when mounted on the bass drum. Granted, this is bound to happen to any drum, but these just sounded so sweet unmounted that you'd hate to lose too much of that natural resonance.

Keep in mind that different effects will be achieved with different heads. Pearl equips these drums with *Pinstripes*, so that's obviously what the company feels most accurately reflects the optimal sound the drums should produce. The superior sustain of the birch shells does seem to offset any potential dulling effect *Pinstripe* heads might otherwise cause, so Pearl's choice seems to be a good one.

## The Snare Drums

The steel *Free Floating* snare that comes standard with this kit sounded fine, despite some unfortunate flaws. The drum featured a very nice chrome finish, *Super Hoops*, and ten high-tension lugs attached to the lower tray assembly, allowing the user to switch among Pearl's other *Free Floating* shells. The drum's sound was bright, ringing, fairly loud, and with a good crack at both high and low tensions.

Though the drum sounded fine during the gig, a couple of its flaws were bothersome. First, the snare on/off mechanism was loose, annoyingly moving from side to side when the lever was flipped. I tried to tighten the screw that seemed to be the culprit, but the mechanism still moved. Second, the top bearing edge had an obvious bumpy imperfection at the spot where the shell is welded together. Since it's a steel shell,



this isn't something that can easily be sanded smooth. Third, either a couple of the lug casings were seriously off line, or the holes in the top hoop were not accurately drilled. After taking the top head off and then replacing the hoop, I noticed that at two places the lug nuts were passing through the holes at serious angles. After tightening them up, things seemed to straighten out a little, but not nearly enough, and not enough to alleviate my worries about how long a situation like this would take to start causing problems.

Happily, the 6 1/2" maple-shelled *Custom Classic* snare that Pearl sent along was free of any imperfections. In fact, this was quite an attractive and apparently finely crafted drum. Bearing edges were very smooth, the one-piece shell was nicely joined with itself, and the "bridge-type" lugs complemented the lacquered finish to create a pretty classy-looking instrument. Too bad it featured 2mm brass hoops rather than die-cast ones, because this drum could use a little more ballsiness than it had. The sound was nice, warm, and fairly dry—you won't need much muffling here—and the snare response was sensitive, but the drum wasn't terribly loud or gutsy. At anything other than a loud rock gig, though, it would be fine. I tuned it pretty high, and it fit in with subtler tunes quite nicely. Maybe with some die-cast hoops on there it could even be a good hard rock choice.

### How The Kit Holds Up

Quite well, actually. Pearl's got some cool hardware things going on here. Personally, I could do without all the dou-



Photo by Scott Gary Bienstock

ble-braced stuff, but, hey, if so many people are willing to carry that extra weight around with them, more power to 'em. Either way, the cymbal stands won't go anywhere without being picked up and carried away, and they're topped off by Pearl's great *uni-lock* cymbal tilters—smooth, very adjustable, and very secure. (In fact, all the wing nuts used in various parts of this kit hold well and are just the right size for what they are intended.)

The bass drum spurs are real nice, too. They lock in only two positions—flush to the shell, and in a standing position—which is all you really need, anyway. The spurs can be extended via wing nuts, and spikes protrude by a quick pull and turn of the heavy rubber feet.

Tom-toms are mounted on the bass drum with two down posts, each with a memory lock at either end. Height and lateral tom movement are controlled by wing nuts, vertical tom movement by drum key-operated nuts. The design is very strong, and very adjustable.

The floor tom legs are particularly clever. The clamps are hinged, and the legs' memory locks are designed as part

of the clamp's shape. Again: attractive, strong, and very functional.

The hi-hat stand was also sturdy, easily adjustable, and functional. The stand's feet are the same as the bass drum's: a quick turn and pull, and out pop your spikes. It also features an adjustable footboard angle via two drum key-operated nuts where the pedal meets the pull-down assembly. The pedal was also smooth to operate, as was the bass drum pedal, which features a toe-stop, a single-chain pull system, and adjustable footboard tension and beater angle.

The snare stand that came with this kit is just a little too bulky. I mean, how hard do you have to be slamming to knock over a snare stand, anyway? The basket tension knob is also a pain; it promotes knuckle-knocking. The stand's adjustability is fine—it goes high and low and back and forth easily enough. And the universal tilt triangle adjustment is a good idea, and holds well. But I can't help but feel there's a bit of sturdiness overkill here.

### The Bottom Line

This kit was a ball to play. After getting the tuning just right, you really begin to appreciate the effects of the birch shells. Pearl may call this a *Studio* kit, but in live settings it didn't sound overly controlled, like you might expect a "studio" kit to sound. Its tones were very clear, but they had guts, sustain, and projection, too. Aside from one questionable snare drum, the design and craftsmanship of the rest of the kit were top-notch, and the hardware was all sturdy and versatile.

The five-piece kit we were sent for review lists at \$2,790. The 6 1/2" *Custom Classic* snare drum lists for \$660.

# Cappella Drumsticks

■ by Rick Mattingly

**You may not know the name, but you've probably played with these sticks already...**

Chances are you've used Cappella sticks at some point in your drumming career. But the sticks probably had someone else's name on them—either a local music store or a major drum manufacturer. That's because for many, many years, Cappella has been turning out sticks for other people. Now they've decided to market sticks under their own name. So while the logo is new, the company itself has a lot of experience under its belt.

The sticks are available in a variety of shapes and sizes, and with most of the



models there are wood- and nylon-tip versions. According to the catalog, Cappella sticks are made from either maple or hickory. We were sent three pair for review: 5A nylon tip, Rock nylon tip, and 3D wood tip. All the sticks we received were made of hickory.

The Cappella 5As were slightly fatter and longer than the 5As I'm used to, but they did taper down to the regular width at the tip. The sticks were also a little heavier than I expected, which usually indicates a denser wood. Whatever the reason, they gave an especially nice rimshot sound. The nylon tip was the familiar oval shape, and seemed to be attached firmly.

The Rock model was a nice, hefty stick. Proportionally it was similar to the 5A, but was fatter and longer. There was plenty of wood at the neck, and the nylon

tip was especially large. The stick stood up well to hard playing on the bell of a ride cymbal.

The Cappella 3D was the smallest of the lot, but was still a bit larger than a typical jazz stick. This one featured a rounded wooden bead, slightly on the small side. This was the only

area in which I detected less than excellent workmanship, as the bead had a somewhat rough feel and appearance. A bit more sanding would have smoothed it off just fine.

Overall, though, the sticks had a quality look and feel. They were all perfectly straight and reasonably pitch-paired. The finish was smooth, and there were no visible defects in the grain. And throughout the testing, I had this feeling of *deja-vu*, as if I had used these sticks before. Only the name was changed.

Our test sticks list for \$8.10 (wood tip) and \$8.70 (nylon tip) per pair. Other models run from \$7.65 (certain maple sticks) to \$12.00 (red-heart hickory S models) per pair. For more specific model descriptions, contact Cappella for a catalog, at P.O. Box 247, Hightstown, New Jersey 08520.

# Quick Bag

■ by Rick Van Horn

The *Quick Bag* is designed to both transport drumsticks, mallets, and accessories and also to put them in a convenient position for the performing drummer. (It also does a bit of light housekeeping as a dust-cover for your drum stool.)

Essentially, the *Quick Bag* is an oversized stick bag that does not "hinge" in the traditional manner. Instead, the sides of the bag are fitted around a cir-

cular top, creating a sort of cylinder when the bag is opened. The opened bag fits over your stool, putting the pouches containing the sticks below and on either side of you when you're seated on the stool. You sit on the top of the bag, rather than on the seat itself.

The design of the bag includes some nice touches. There are four stick pouches on either side. One of these is full-width, and can accommodate several extra pairs of sticks that you might not need right away. The other three have stitching strategically placed so that sticks can extend out of them for quick access. In addition to the stick pouches, there are two small pouches suitable for wrenches, screwdrivers, and other





straight tools, and a very nice accessories pouch in a position that would be directly in front of and between the legs of the drummer. This would be ideal for drumkeys, earplugs, and other small, easily-dropped items.

The *Quick Bag* is large, and can contain quite a few pairs of sticks, yet it still folds compactly. A flap completely covers the sticks when not in use (keeping them out of sight and less prone to pilferage in a club situation), and prevents them from falling out in transit. When tucked behind the sticks, this same flap also serves to push them out of the pockets a bit for easier grabbing. A velcro-equipped strap secures the closed bag, and a couple of carrying straps complete the design.

All in all, the *Quick Bag* is a nice variation on the traditional stick-bag design (and one that doesn't have to be hung on a drum, which appeals to me from an acoustic point of view). Although the original version that I checked out is designed to fit only round-top stools (with either 12" or 13" models available), I've been informed by the manufacturer that versions to fit the bicycle-seat stools that are currently in vogue will be available shortly.

My only reservation pertains to the heavy-duty *Cordura* from which the bag is made. Although it's an excellent choice for a stick bag, it may not be the best choice for the top of a drum seat, since it is quite rough and abrasive. I don't see any problem if you're wearing denim or other heavy fabrics, but the seat of your *Spandex* pants or tuxedo trousers could be damaged quickly. The manufacturers might want to consider making the top of the *Quick Bag* out of some smoother fabric—or even out of vinyl, which is a more traditional material for drum-stool seats. Barring this problem, though, I think the *Quick Bag* offers excellent construction and design, convenience, and even an acoustic advantage over traditional stick bags. It's available for \$49.95 from SourceTek Marketing Group, 9460 S. Union Square, Suite 237, Sandy, Utah 84070.

## Super Shine Cymbal Cleaner

■ by Rick Mattingly



Rick Van Horn hates my cymbals. It's not so much that I prefer dark, trashy sounding cymbals and he prefers bright, pingy ones. I think it has more to do with the fact that he keeps his cymbals bright and polished, and I never clean my cymbals. Never. Ever.

Once I even brought in a cymbal I owned that I thought he would like: a regular 20" A Zildjian medium ride. I'll never forget the expression on his face when he saw it. "How old is that cymbal?" he asked. "Oh, about 20 years," I replied. "How long has it been since you've cleaned it?" he said. "Cleaned it? Why should I clean it?" I retorted. "Well," he said, "not only would it look a lot better, but it might sound better, too. All of that dirt has to mute the cymbal somewhat."

We put the cymbal on a stand and played it. It sounded alright to me, but I had to admit that it didn't sound as bright as the typical A Zildjian. Did I just happen to own a darker-than-normal A, or was all of that dirt actually having an

effect? Since I liked the way it sounded, I decided not to worry about it.

Recently, however, I joined a new band, and I found myself wanting a brighter ride cymbal than the old KI had been using. So I dug out the 20" A—but it really wasn't doing the job the way I expected it to. I actually considered cleaning the cymbal, but never got around to it.

Then one day, a UPS truck pulled up with a package from MD. Inside were several items that Rick Van Horn wanted me to review, including a bottle of Super Shine Cymbal Cleaner. There are several people he could have asked to do that particular review, but he sent the stuff to me. And I know why. He's still disgusted by the thought of my dirty cymbals. Okay, RVH, you win.

I poured some Super Shine directly on the 20" ride and started wiping it with a circular motion, following the lathe grooves in the cymbal. The thick paper towels I was using got black very quickly, and I had to change to new ones often. After a couple of minutes, I began to wonder if I was doing the cymbal more harm than good, as it became covered with a gray film. But with repeated applications of Super Shine and continued wiping and buffing, the cymbal started looking better and better. In certain light it did, in fact, look brand new; in other light, you could see rings of black in the deepest grooves.

At one point I turned the cymbal over and tried cleaning the underside. The bottom wasn't nearly as dirty as the top had been, but it was dirty enough. However, for some reason, the Super Shine had very little effect on the bottom, even after repeated applications. It brightened it a little bit overall, but a lot of the smudges still remained.

According to the instructions on the can, the more you apply Super Shine to

your cymbal, the better it will look, so I turned the cymbal back over and continued cleaning the playing surface. After using almost two-thirds of the can, the cymbal really did look almost new (on the top, anyway). But then came the real test: Would there be a difference in the sound? There was. The cymbal did, indeed, sound brighter than it had before I cleaned it.

The cymbal even *felt* different. If you run your fingers over a new cymbal from the center out, the grooves have somewhat of an edge to them. After a while though, the cymbal will feel much smoother. My cymbal felt quite smooth, but I had never really attributed that to dirt. I assumed that all of the striking, as well as my cymbals rubbing against each other when dropped into a cymbal bag, had worn the grooves down somewhat. But as I was cleaning the cymbal, I started noticing a difference right through the paper towels I was buffing it with. The grooves started having more of an edge again.

Keep in mind that my cymbal was *quite* old and *very* dirty, and I spent over three hours cleaning it. If you clean your cymbals with any regularity at all, you probably won't get the extreme results I got in terms of changing the sound. But I'm now convinced that dirt buildup has

a much greater effect on a cymbal's sound than I had ever thought. (Even though Van Horn kept telling me so. I hate it when he's right.)

Just to make sure, I cleaned a 16" old K that I bought used about 15 years ago. It was at least as dirty as my 20" had been, and possibly even more so. For some reason, this one came clean much quicker than the 20" (even accounting for the fact that it was smaller). And this time, I achieved almost equal results on both sides of the cymbal. I actually spent a little more time on the bottom, and it still isn't quite as shiny as the top, but it's pretty close. I found myself wondering if the curve of the cymbal has anything to do with it, as the top is curved outward and the bottom is curved inward. Perhaps dirt gets trapped in the bottom grooves more easily because of that.

Anyway, again I checked to see if cleaning the cymbal affected the sound, and again it did. Before cleaning, that cymbal was sounding quite muted. Cleaning it brought it back to life. (Again I feel obliged to point out that this cymbal was extremely dirty, so don't expect your cymbal to completely change character if it's already reasonably clean.)

As one final test, I applied some Super Shine to a cloth and rubbed it over the

inked logo on a new cymbal—which melted right off. So if you like logos on your cymbals, you should probably keep the Super Shine away from that area.

If you are considering trying a bottle of Super Shine, there are a couple of things I can recommend that are not listed on the can. First, use the product outside, or at least in a place with good ventilation. Its smell resembles a strong cleaning solvent. Second, wear rubber gloves. In the process of cleaning my cymbal, the ends of my fingers got quite black. It took quite a bit of scrubbing to get them clean, and afterwards, I could still smell it on my hands.

While I did spend a fair amount of time cleaning my two cymbals, I can't say I really had to work all that hard. Towards the end of the process I used a little elbow grease to bring out the shine and make sure all of the Super Shine was off the cymbal, but for the most part I wasn't having to rub particularly hard, and there was no evidence of abrasion. My cymbals now look and sound better than before, so I have to say that Super Shine does what it's supposed to. The suggested list price for an 8 oz. can is \$7.50. If you can't find the cleaner in your local store, contact Super Shine International, 3878 Maybelle Avenue, Building #4, Oakland, California 94619.

## Pro-Mark Bobby Rock Model Sticks

■ by Rick Van Horn

Let's get something straight right away. These sticks are not for the faint of heart (or weak of wrist). They are designed for power playing—where factors such as rebound and stick tonality are dispensed with in favor of durability and impact. There's nothing *wrong* with that; just know that these are not the sticks you're going to want if you're into finger control.

To begin with, these are *big* sticks. They're 21/32" in diameter, making them a bit fatter than Pro-Mark's standard 2B. They are also a whopping 17 1/2" long, making them a full half-inch longer than any other major stick model. The taper is short (for durability) and the bead is a large acorn shape (for impact power). Like I said: *big* sticks.

The length is probably the most unique element of these sticks, and only those drummers who really need that sort of reach are going to be comfortable with them. That's simply because that length dramatically affects the balance of the stick: There's a lot more wood out in front of your hand than you are used to. That means more weight behind the downstroke and less




rebound than shorter sticks would provide. The *Bobby Rock* sticks don't play themselves, but they sure make themselves heard—and felt—on the drums. Don't expect any delicate cymbal sounds, either; these sticks just pound on a ride cymbal and assault a crash cymbal unmercifully. (But if you're using heavy rock rides and crashes, that's often what you need to get them moving. We're not talking about subtlety here.)

Drummers who play in the style of Bobby Rock will very likely be interested in his autograph-model stick. It is unquestionably a powerful tool for the high-energy, high-volume player. The stick is available in Pro-Mark's Texas Hickory line, in wood tip only, at \$8.25 per pair.








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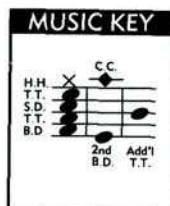
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# Double Bass Fills: Try This!

by Greg D'Angelo



One of my favorite applications for double bass is to treat it as my biggest tom. When playing a drum fill the norm is to start on the snare drum or smallest tom, go around the kit, and crash at the end, supporting that crash with a bass drum hit. An alternative that I like to play is to end the fill by rolling on the bass drums instead of the last tom.

Please don't misunderstand me; I'm not saying don't play on the last tom. What I'm saying is go past the last tom and end rolling with the bass drums. Just think of your feet as a second pair of hands.

When practicing these fills it's a good idea to pay close attention to your sticking. The sticking on all these exercises should alternate right to left (left to right if you are a lefty). Let me clarify this a bit. If we're playing 16th notes (counted 1e&a, 2e&a, etc.), the "1's" and "&'s" are right strokes and the "e's"

and "a's" are left strokes.



On exercises 4 and 5, the bass drum picks up on the left foot.



The next group of exercises combines beats and fills based on this concept.



As you can see, the combinations are virtually limitless. The attitude that the bass drums project coming out of a fill is like a ton of bricks. This can be a very effective addition to your drumming vocabulary. Have fun with it!



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# Cliff Almond

## In The Hot Seat With Michel Camilo

■ by Jeff Potter

There are certain bands on the New York scene that have a history of exposing notable up & comers. One of those, the Michel Camilo trio, has a red-hot drum seat that has already springboarded both Dave Weckl and Joel Rosenblatt to even greater heights. Now there's a new young drummer, Cliff Almond, filling that seat.

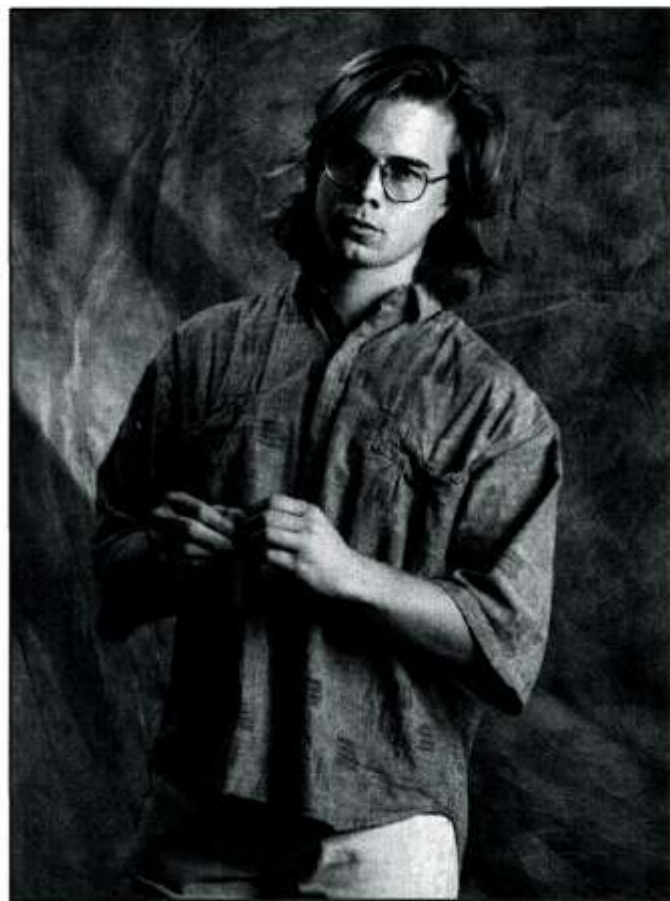
After cutting two Japanese albums (*Why Not?* and *Suntan*), Michel finally debuted domestically on CBS/Portrait Records. Featuring Weckl, Rosenblatt, and Marvin "Smitty" Smith on various cuts, *Michel Camilo* and *On Fire* were a drummer's listening feast. Camilo's former drummers left behind a legacy of high standards, demanding that a drummer be strongly in control of jazz chops, Latin rhythms, funk, odd meters, oddly subdivided figures, and razor-sharp dynamics—all within a tight, clean framework that grooves with a fever. That's the hot seat Cliff Almond was climbing onto, and he knew it. Michel's records had been a major influence in his development, and he had dissected Weckl's tracks under a microscope.

"When I first heard Dave," he recalls, "I was going to school at P.I.T. I thought, 'Wow! That guy has got down everything I've been working for.' At the same time, I didn't want to completely clone him. In fact, that's something I'm still trying to back out of, because a lot of people have compared me to him."

Naturally, taking over Dave's seat has magnified the inevitable comparisons. But there's a logic to Cliff's fortune, and he is realistic about it. "Michel looks for a cleanliness of sound and subdivisions. So if I didn't have the stuff that I picked up from Dave, then I probably wouldn't have gotten the gig. There's time for developing the other stuff later."

At only 22 years of age, Cliff certainly has time for growth. And he's already moving away from the "clone syndrome," due to his new seat. His challenging gig has forced him to constantly think on his feet, because although Michel has a specific idea of how he wants his drum parts realized, he also demands personal input within those guidelines.

"One of the things he said to me in the studio was, 'Don't play this like a prefabricated track; I want to hear something totally new.' Sometimes he'd say, 'I think you could do more with it here to make it more exciting.' That made me sort of scared—pressured. But after I'd listen back to the difference, I'd realize that once it came out, it came out *well*. That was new to me, because I was from the background where you nail



something in the studio by just playing what should be played, and that's it.

"When playing live, each tune is a different ball game every night. I can't tell you how many times we get off stage and Michel says, 'You should have done this here or that there.' The next night, I'll use his suggestion and he'll say, 'No. That was *last* night; tonight is a whole different thing.'"

Many of Michel's sidemen past and present have described the vivacious pianist (and former percussionist) as "demanding." "Yeah, he's demanding as hell," Cliff concedes. "But we both think the same way. He zeroes in on drum things every time I play, and I think that's great, because that's how I'll get better. We had just three days of rehearsal before starting the tour, and that was tough. When I started working on the music I knew all of Michel's tunes because I sat in my room playing along with the tape every day. But when you sit down and play with *him* it's a different ball game. For instance, he might point out to me, 'You're not doing this in your left hand.' It might be one note in the middle of a tune that I never noticed—a ghost note or *anything*—but he picks it out. He's got great ears for that. At first it kind of pressured me, but the experience I've gained with him and the level of concentration that I can now apply to anything I play has been worth the stomach aches."



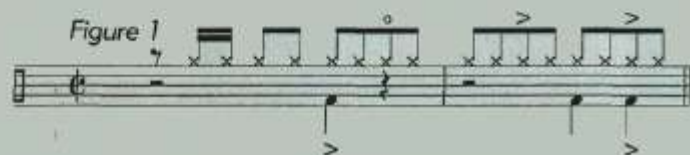
## Focusing In On The Other Hand

Cliff Almond's playing on *On The Other Hand* is hot. Half of the disc features the trio format and the other half is augmented by stellar horn players. Pick up a copy and listen to how Cliff handles the title track, a buoyant modern calypso. During the album rehearsals, the groove in Figure 1 was dictated to Cliff. "This number had two things that were supposed to be played at all times," Cliff explains, "even as the tune progressed: the hi-hat pattern—keeping in mind accented upbeats along with the open note being very important—and also the bass drum pattern. Michel was very insistent that these two parts remain consistent throughout the tune—even when I was playing the ride. I also attempted to spice up the groove a bit by putting in some snare over it." (See Figure 2.)

When playing this groove, Cliff split up the hi-hat part between two hats. Basically, he played the left hat with the

left hand and the right closed remote hat with the right hand (which gave a heightened definition to the accented upbeats requested by Michel). Over the constant patterns, Cliff sets up and plays the horn hits and lays out fills in a way that never interrupts the great feel and helps kick up the heat.

"Journey" is a complex track that goes through a myriad of meters fueled by an acoustic fusion drive. The basic riff in Figure 3 appears as an important element of the head. Alternating with that specifically written groove is another pulse originally written on Cliff's charts as a single line (Figure 4.) Cliff fleshes this out, hitting these accents while playing a groove around the tricky figure. Rather than initially approaching this groove in broken-down groupings, Cliff prefers to learn such sections by practicing playing over and around the figure repetitively until he naturally feels it without grouping or "counting."



During an extended woodshedding period after finishing up at P.I.T. ("I practiced all day for about two years," he recalls), Cliff sent out tapes to Dave Weckl, and the two drummers developed an on-and-off correspondence. Recognizing a special talent in the young player, Dave set time aside to meet occasionally with Cliff in the course of his clinic and performance travels. It was at such a clinic that Dave finally heard Cliff play in person. "Not long after that," Cliff recalls, "Dave called me and said, 'Michel's looking for a drummer, and I gave him your name.' I was very lucky that Dave was nice enough to do that."

Cliff rushed some tapes to Michel, and then flew to New York to audition. Once the hot seat was his, Cliff faced a brief rehearsal period and some concentrated shedding in preparation for a U.S. tour. "The thing I needed to approach when I got this gig," he says, "was something that I had never really needed to deal with before: intense concentration and focusing as a *trio*. In a trio, it's important to be able to play the right thing at the right time. Michel does have a certain way of hearing things, so I had to please him in that regard. But it wasn't really a question of *chops*, because I had worked my butt off on technique. The biggest challenge was listening and figuring out *conceptual* things. There are certain nuances in each tune that I didn't pick up at first. For example, in the head of 'Suite Sandrine Part I' there's a 'back-beat' there that I never realized. I heard it, but it's *not nailed*, it's more implied.

"I also had to get used to the fact that the arrangements have grown over time. 'Crossroads,' a fast swing, was the first tune we played together. We started and it was all pretty tight, with the same subdivision prevailing in our heads. But then we went to the part before the solo section. It's a blues form, and I was used to hearing what was on the disc. So I kept playing that part—but they played a kind of half-time, back-and-forth trading that was just so far out in left field that I didn't know how to react to it."

The hot seat got even hotter for Cliff when it came time to record Michel's latest release, *On The Other Hand*. Michel gave Cliff a great vote of confidence by electing him to record the entire disc. (Michel hadn't recorded a single-drummer album since his original trio cut *Why Not?* in 1985, with Weckl at the helm.) The charts for *On The Other Hand* were treacherous, and outside of some local California studio work, this was Cliff's first all-out album date. "There were times before we started the album that I was sweating," he remembers. "A lot of times, I listened to the rehearsal tape and *hated* what I sounded like. I'm a real perfectionist, and if any little thing is off, I get wigged. I only had three or four days to take care of this, and I got really depressed. Then I just caught myself and said, 'Well...learn!' [laughs] If I had let the pressure get to me, I would have ruined everything. The better your attitude, the better you play."

Rising to the heights Cliff Almond has risen to at such a young age could easily be a source for some major ego inflation. Yet Cliff looks at his success from a modest and realistic point of view. "I know I'm lucky as hell to have this gig," Cliff reflects. "There are a thousand guys who would kill to have it and could cut it just as well as or better than I can. That's a scary thought. But dwelling on such thoughts is exactly what

## Cliff's Tools

Whether playing live or in the studio, Cliff uses the same setup. His Yamaha *Recording Series* kit includes 8", 10", 12", and 14" toms in standard depths. The snare is a 5 1/2" Ludwig 400 with a brass coating on the inner side of the shell. "My bass is a 16x20," says Cliff. "I got that for a nice mix between a 22" and an 18", because some of the tunes we do are straight-ahead."

All of Cliff's cymbals are K/Zildjians, including 8" and 12" *Brilliant* splashes, a 20" *Custom Dry Ride*, a 20" *Brilliant* ride with rivets, a 17" *Dark Crash*, a 14" *Brilliant China Boy*, and a 15" *Brilliant Dark Crash*. His regular hi-hats feature a 13" K on the top and a *Brilliant* K on the bottom. The remote hats are a 13" K/Z combination. His Vic Firth 5A wood-tipped sticks play on all Remo heads: There are coated *Ambassadors* on the snare, bass, and high toms, and on lower toms he prefers clear *Ambassadors*. The bottom heads are all clear *Ambassadors*.

can keep you from getting better. The bottom line to me is playing."

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# Easy Steps To Independence: Part 3

by Sharon Eldridge

## MUSIC KEY

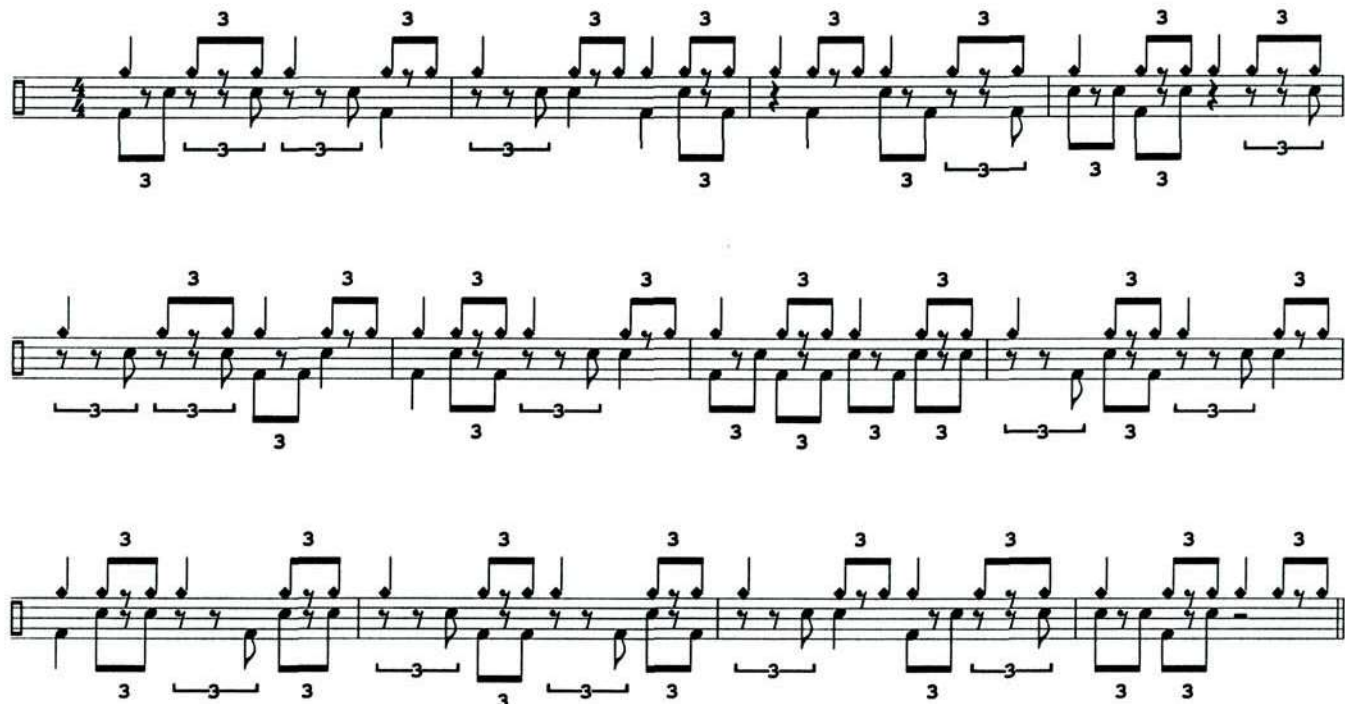


The ability to play rhythmic figures with both the left hand and the right foot against a smooth, undisrupted right-hand jazz cymbal beat is a prerequisite to good jazz drumming. In Part 1 of this series we began by developing the ability of the left hand to play various figures against the repetitive cymbal rhythm. In Part 2 we focused on developing independence with the right foot alone against the same continuous right-hand time flow. This month we'll combine the two.

Be sure to start out slowly. Increase the tempo *only* after you're certain each pattern is being played correctly and with a relaxed groove. Practicing with a metronome is also highly recommended. (Note: Even though the hi-hat is not notated, it should be played on beats 2 and 4 with the left foot throughout.)



# 12-Bar Exercise



Excerpted from the forthcoming publication, *All Styles For The Modern Drummer*, by Sharon Eldridge.



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# Remembering Buddy: Part 1

■ by Cathy Rich

*April 2, 1991 will mark four years since the passing of one of the greatest drummers who ever lived—Buddy Rich. Though many have written about Buddy over the years, and many professed to have known him well, perhaps no one really knew him better than his loving daughter, Cathy.*

*In fitting tribute to the man who set the standard for most of us, MD proudly presents this touching and revealing portrait of Buddy from the personal recollections of Cathy Rich.*

It's hard for me to describe the feelings and thoughts I've had over the four years since my father's death. To say that he had a profound effect on me during the course of my life would be an understatement. He was my best friend, my staunchest supporter, my loudest cheerleader, and the best father one could ever hope for.

Over the past few years, many people have written articles about Buddy. But the one thing that the writers of these articles have in common is a lack of knowledge about the *man*. We

all know about the enormous talent, the incredible wit, and the infamous temper. But what about the person behind all that? To gain insight on Buddy the musician, one must first look at Buddy the person.

Before I begin the journey back through my life with my father, we must first go back to the beginning of *his* life: New York in 1917, when Vaudeville was flourishing. My grandparents had a song and dance act and were moderately successful on the circuit. By the time my father was 18 months old, he was part of the act. The story, as my father remembered it, went like this: A radio was playing in the kitchen of their home in Brooklyn, and my father, still in a highchair, was tapping along to the music with his baby spoon. My grandfather noticed that the baby was not just banging, but playing rhythms in perfect time to the music. He handed him a second spoon. That was the beginning.

The rest of the story unfolds like something fictional. The child becomes known as "Traps" the Drum Wonder, and soon begins to conquer audiences all over the world. He became the star of the *Ziegfeld Follies* and the *Pinwheel Revue*. By age six, he was the second highest paid child star next to Jackie Coogan, and had already toured Australia. At this point, my grandmother left the act to care for the three other children. My grandfather devoted his life to managing the career of Traps. My father, although extremely intelligent and well-read, had no formal education. There was the occasional tutor (to keep the child labor board happy), but that was the extent of it. As is the case with many child prodigies, my father did not have what one would call a "childhood." He was not allowed to play with other children for fear he would hurt himself and not be



"Traps" the Drum Wonder headlining the Ziegfeld Follies at age six



Buddy with his father, Robert Rich, in 1936



able to work. And since he was now supporting his entire family, normal childhood activities were out of the question. So later, as an adult, my father would sometimes act out that lost childhood. A severe practical joker, he got me many times in pie fights, car chases, prank phone calls, and midnight terror raids.

In 1923, the \$1,200 a week he made was like \$100,000 a week now. But at that time there were no laws protecting children and the money they earned. Consequently, money was never put away for him, his education, or his future. The pressure to work was always with him. Even as a child, work came before anything. It was all he knew, and it followed him throughout his life. There weren't many things that kept my father from showing up on the job. He felt that "the show must go on," no matter what! It was a belief instilled by his father, and later, a philosophy that Buddy passed on to those who worked for him.

My father once told me of a time when he was about eleven years old. He had worn his hair long in what was called a "Buster Brown" cut. But he was now getting too old to be "cute" Baby Traps, and wanted to cut it because other children teased him unmercifully. My grandfather said no, it was part of the act.

Now, my father was warned never to fight, because if he broke an arm and couldn't work, it would be disastrous. One day the local bully was taunting him and started chasing him down the block. Doing as he had been told, he started running towards home screaming for my grandfather, who heard the commotion and was waiting on the front stoop. As my father ran up the steps, he was greeted by a fist in the face from my grandfather, who called him a sissy, and told him to *never* again

run from a fight. At a tender age, lessons were already being learned about repressed anger and humiliation—mixed messages and isolation.

When my father was seventeen, Vaudeville was in its final days, and there were few jobs. He was already a show business veteran who could sing, tap dance, and MC a show better than anyone. But he worried about what he would do next. He often told me stories of times when he would take the train to Manhattan to hear all the great jazz artists of that era. He began cultivating friendships within the jazz world, and word quickly spread about the "kid" who could play like no one had ever seen or heard. After sitting in with Joe Marsalas' band one Sunday afternoon at the Hickory House, he was offered the job on the spot. He took it, and the rest is history. From there he went to Bunny Berrigan, Tommy Dorsey, Artie Shaw, and finally his own band in 1946, backed by fellow Dorsey-ite Frank Sinatra.

Although my father was considered by most to be a big band drummer, he also played and recorded in many small group settings with such geniuses as Art Tatum, Charlie Parker, Lester Young, Dizzy Gillespie, and Coleman Hawkins, to name a few. In the '50s, my father was on the road with Norman Granz' *Jazz At The Philharmonic*, and later joined the Harry James band, earning him a place in the *Guinness Book Of Records* as the world's highest-paid sideman.

In 1953, my father and Gene Krupa were touring with *Jazz At The Philharmonic*. The finale of the show was a drum battle between the two. During the run of the show, Gene introduced my father to my mother, Marie, who happened to be dating Gene at the time. Not being one to let anything stand in his way, my father asked her out and proposed on their first date. They married six months later and were married for 34 years.

My dad and Gene remained friends over the years. In 1973, when Gene was stricken with leukemia, my father wanted to do something special for him. He and his manager, Stanley Kay, organized a party and invited all of the drummers who had meant something in Gene's life. During the course of the evening, each person stood up and toasted Gene, and told a



Buddy and Marie Rich dining at the Astor Roof in 1953. Note Harry James and actress/wife Betty Grable directly behind.



The proud father with his wife and newborn daughter

story about the influence he had on their lives. Joe Morello, Zutty Singleton, Roy Knapp, Henry Adler, Jo Jones, Bobby Colomby, Jerry Lewis, and Frank Ippolito all said their final farewells to Gene, who passed away a few months later. My father had many philosophies, and one was that we should give flowers to the *living*. He could never understand why people waited for someone to die to give them a tribute. He felt we should let people know how much they mean to us while they're still here.

Over the years the question I've been asked most is, "What was it like growing up with Buddy as a father?" Well, I was born into a world of Count Basie, Frank Sinatra, and John Coltrane. My father had speakers put in my nursery, so my musical education started almost immediately. One of my earliest recollections is of being in a crib and hearing Frank Sinatra singing "In The Wee Small Hours."

Buddy had very strong beliefs, and he tried to instill those beliefs in me. He was a campaigner for the underdog, and always made time to go to schools, hospitals, and prisons to bring his music to people who couldn't get out to see him. I believe that a true humanitarian is someone who does things for others because it makes them feel good, not for how much publicity you get out of it. When my father did charitable work, his only requirement was that there be *no* publicity. He told me that he didn't need other people thinking, "Gee, what a swell guy." As long as *he* knew, that was *all* that mattered.

One winter evening we were watching the news, and a story came on about an elderly woman in Harlem whose electricity was to be turned off because she couldn't pay her bill. My father told me to call the station and get the reporter who had done the story. My father told him he wanted to pay the woman's bill for the year, but only if no one knew who had done it. The reporter gave his word, and the deed was done. Things like this happened all the time, and no one knew, except those of us who lived every day with him.

My dad also found it difficult to walk down the streets of New York and witness the poor and homeless. He gave money to nearly everyone he saw. He would later come home, and we'd have long discussions about our responsibility to help those who had less than we had. He was a caring and compassionate person who felt things very deeply.

When asked to go to South Africa on more than a few occasions, Buddy always turned it down. He had a black bass player who would not have been allowed to play on the same stage, or stay in the same hotel. He was campaigning against apartheid

long before it became a cause celebre. The money never mattered to him. It was always about staying true to your beliefs.

My father felt that one needn't have the trappings of success to be successful. We didn't sit at the dinner table and talk about show biz things. In fact, when my father was home, we had a semi-normal life. He was interested in my school activities. If I was ever doing a recital or a school concert, he was always there—which is amazing when you consider he was on the road 48 weeks a year.

There was not a single indication of what my father did for a living in our home—no drums, no sticks, not a single cymbal. When he was home, it was his sanctuary away from the business. In the years that we shared a home, I never saw him practice once. His reasoning was that he "practiced" on the job. His playing came so naturally, and was such a God-given ability, that it was second-nature to him. He didn't walk around thinking about how great he was. He was, in fact, quite modest about his talents. But as hard as he sometimes was on his musicians, he was twice as hard on himself. He didn't expect anything from others that he didn't expect from himself. I've seen him defy insurmountable odds and still be up on the bandstand giving 100%. If he was playing before 12 people or

12 thousand, he gave his all—every night.

During the recording of the *Keep The Customer Satisfied* album, my father was having severe back problems. The pain was so excruciating that between sets he would lie on the floor of his dressing room in the dark. When it was time to play, it took three men to carry him to the stage and place him behind his drums. But once the curtain went up, it was as if the pain disappeared. The audience never

knew, and the music never suffered. When the set was over, he was carried back to his dressing room to rest.

A year later, he had two discs removed from his spine. The surgery was unsuccessful, and he lived the rest of his life with almost constant back pain. His schedule didn't change because of it, nor did his lifestyle. He traveled just as much and worked just as hard. But he did start riding on the bus with the band a lot more. He felt that if he was on the bus, the morale would be higher because the band would feel that he was really "just one of the guys." In reality, the band would have probably liked it more if he had found another means of transportation. He tended to like it quiet on the bus after the job, and the band was usually just getting ready to party. My father could hear you eating a jelly doughnut ten rows behind him on a noisy bus. But if you asked him a question he didn't like, he suddenly became stone deaf.



**A playful Buddy at home with young Cathy Rich**





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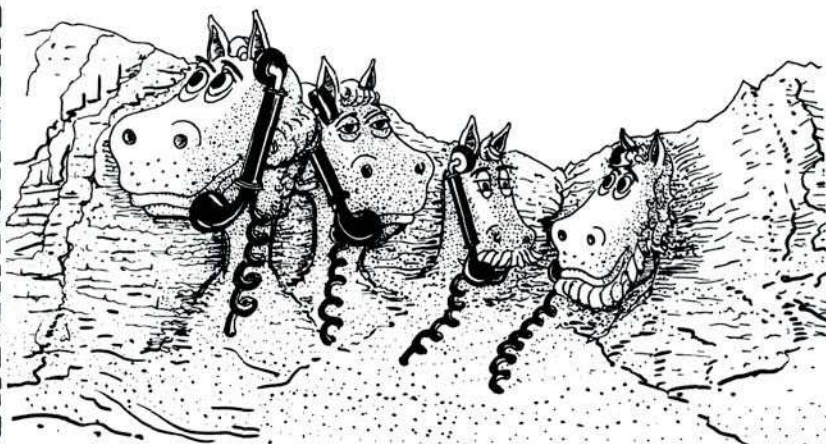
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did; I kind of missed the boat on that. I kind of jumped on, "Gee, how is Tony Williams doing that thing with the bass drum?" and "How is Max Roach dropping those bombs?"

**RF:** What about big bands as opposed to small group jazz?

**GB:** The difference there I think is that a lot of times when you're playing with a big band, maybe the fifth trumpet player is a really great jazz soloist. But for the most part, the other four trumpets, four out of five trombones, and four out of five saxophonists might just be guys who love jazz, but are section players. Maybe they can read the part, but they need a little bit of extra help when it comes to how to come in with the figure. So a drummer's role in a big band might be a little more time-oriented, to try to set up the time a little more. I think in a small group jazz situation, you're allowed a little more freedom to be nebulous with the time, or be a little more out, or a little more "non-stating." I remember when I was at North Texas State, there was a big band where everybody was a soloist, so the drummer could float the time and play displaced Elvin Jones and Jack DeJohnette kinds of things, and people would always know where the beat was. But in other big bands, you really have to lay that time down.

I think I learned the greatest lesson in my life, time-wise, especially in a big band setting, when I did the first Buddy Rich memorial concert. The first one was in New York, and I remember walking around backstage being really, really nervous, warming up like crazy and being real hyper. Then I ran into Steve Gadd, who was real calm and collected and was kind of clicking his sticks together and looking up at the ceiling, trying to get a tempo for the song. He said, "How's it going, Gregg?" I said, "Great, but I'm really nervous," and he said, "I'm just trying to get the right tempo for the song here." I thought to myself, "Wow, what a concept, the right tempo for the song. Here I have to go out there in about five minutes and count off the time and make it swing and guide 18 other members into that tempo, and here's the guy who's the groove-master



of drums, and his focus is on picking the right tempo." I learned the biggest lesson. I watched him get that tempo backstage and walk out front. And while the band was getting the music out, he was clicking his hi-hats together, and subconsciously he was telling the band, "This is where the groove is," so it didn't take four or eight bars to lock in. The band was in a lock from the first downbeat, and I thought, "What could be more important in any style of music than thinking about the exact tempo that would be right for the groove and trying to hold that tempo all the way to the end?" That's my biggest goal in life, whether I'm playing big band swing, Latin, rock, or anything.

**RF:** Rock was the first music in your life, so tell us how you were introduced to it and how you began playing it.

**GB:** Being in a rock band was so different from sitting around practicing. When you had a jazz band, you went to school, there were charts, and there was a right way to do it. With the rock band, there were no charts; there were just four or five guys in a basement trying to pick parts off a tape deck. And it doesn't change as you get older. If you're doing a cover song in a Top-40 band, it's the same thing. You're trying to learn those parts and get them as close as you can to the record. Or you're trying to learn stuff you did on an album, and then make little changes. But I have to say that nothing grates on my nerves more than hearing a drummer play out of context on a rock song. You don't have to play the same kind of fills every night, and you should definitely be creative. But there's nothing worse than trying to play a constant drum solo through a good pop tune. You really should play for the song.

The most fun part is making a song sound right and playing the right part. When you play cover songs or oldies, play the parts. I love playing jam nights around town during the week. There's a club called Spice in Hollywood, where every Thursday night they have a great jam night and guys like John Entwistle from the Who and Carmine Appice go to jam. It's an incredible hang. Sly Stone was in there one night. People will huddle backstage and say, "Hey, do you know how to play 'Ain't That A Shame?'" And somebody will say, "Gee, are we going to



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do the old version or the Cheap Trick version?" And the cool thing about rock is having an appreciation for what came before and trying to play it pretty much like the record. You can be yourself, but I love doing those jams and playing the parts how they are.

What I really enjoy doing is getting an authentic sound, too. I've been playing in a jazz piano trio around town with T Lavitz and Steve Bailey. I talked to Ken Austin at Pearl and asked him to send me a small bebop kit, because it just wasn't working with a bigger bass drum. He sent me a really cool maple kit with an 18" bass drum, a 12" tom, and a 14" floor tom. Tuning those up nice and high with white heads on them kind of makes you feel like you're playing in the style. I like getting that authentic sound and bringing out my old K Zildjians. And when I'm playing rock, I try to really make the drums fit the part. I'll pull out my 24" bass drum and not put anything in it at all on certain things, and I'll go for a big, wide-open John Bonham sound. I have one Pearl kit with a 20" floor tom, and when you hit that floor tom with all your might, it just sounds BIG. It may be hard to control a 20" floor tom dynamically, but that's just the type of thing you can do in your setup to try to be stylistically authentic.

One thing I've had fun doing with Vic Firth is trying to design a stick that is just right. I always had a hard time with that. I loved playing with small sticks with a small bead for bebop. Then on rock stuff I'd have to go with the bigger stick, because I'd always bust the smaller ones on the bell of the cymbal. So we designed a stick that is kind of a combination. It has a good tip where you can get a nice cymbal sound, but it has a big enough neck so that you don't break it on the bell. When I practice, I really try to play with the same kind of technique in both styles.

**RF:** What about Latin?

**GB:** I should preface everything by saying there is no one way of doing things. There are so many ways of playing. Whether you hold your sticks this way or that way, whether you play with your heel up or down, whatever—as long as it's working for you and you're able to play, then it's fine. There are a lot of people who will say, "It has to be this way, this is



the way you'll get the most speed and the most technique." And then you see drummers every day who totally defy what that's all about.

That said, when it comes to Latin music, I really wanted to find out more of an authentic way to play it. I remember going to Japan with Maynard's band, and hearing Tania Maria with Joey Heredia on drums. I was just blown away with the way he and the bass player, John Pena, and the percussionist, Ron Powell, played together. I remember going up to Joey and saying, "Man, you've got to show me some of that songo stuff. What are you playing?" The first thing he said—which was the right thing to say—was, "You've got to listen to bands like Batacumbale and Irakere and Afro-Cuba. Check out these albums and play along with them and try to figure out what the guy is doing. If you want to take some lessons, there are guys like Walfredo Reyes, Alex Acuna, and Luis Conte. Luis is a tremendous percussionist, but he can also teach you from a drumset player's point of view."

So I called Luis, and he showed me how he would want a drummer to play with a percussionist. And I asked him, "What would you like me to play if you were playing a solo?" He said, "When I'm playing congas, I really want to hear that quarter note on the bell. When I go over to the timbales, I've got a bell, so then you can go to the ride cymbal or the hi-hat." He would say, "When I'm playing congas, lay into that cowbell and really support that, but with the left hand, you can kind of play figures that go around what I'm doing on the congas, and maybe your left foot can play clave. Listen to the bass players on the records and find out what they're doing. But remember that a lot of times they're playing figures like 16th-note offbeat things."

The more you learn the rules and the different possibilities of grooves, the more you can start to jam on them. Shortly after those lessons, I got to do a tour with Tania Maria, and Luis played percussion. I remember going out and hearing Walfredo play, and Alex Acuna and Ignacio Berroa, who played with Batacumbale. We were in Puerto Rico with Maynard's band, and there was a drummer with Irakere, and just watching the

way he played was great. I think if there is any thread to all of this, it would be to get the albums. Get Tito Puente albums, and if you want to learn a great way to solo in Latin, transcribe some timbale solos on paper or by ear.

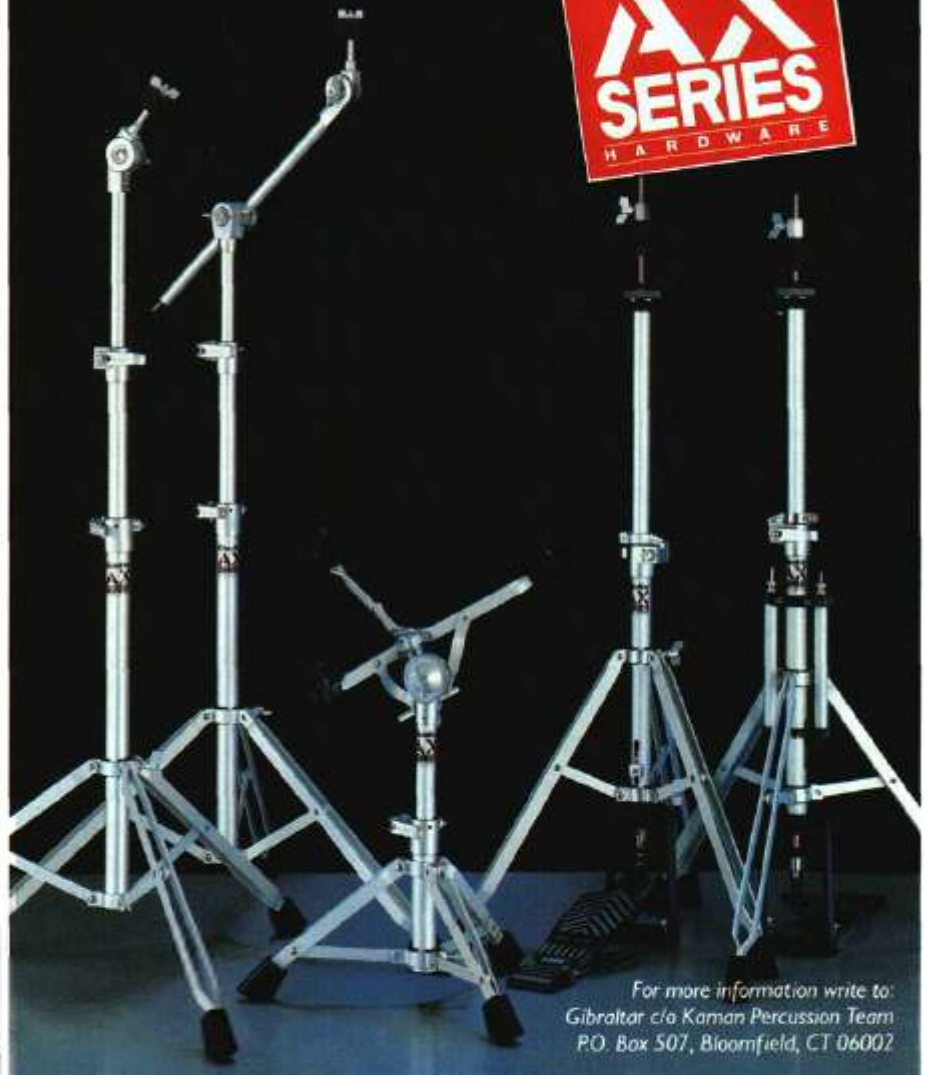
What I try to do during my practice time is pick a tempo in any style and really try to hold that tempo, and tape myself doing that. Don't worry about playing a lot of fills, just keep it as solid as you can and play it the length of a

song, maybe three or four minutes. Then stop, rewind the tape, and spend just as much of your practice time listening back to what you did as you did playing. Listening back to it really helps you be your own critic and see where you might have sped up or slowed down.

Another thing to do is play along with a drum machine and record that also. Then do it without the drum machine and record yourself. Go through all the different styles—with brushes, swing,

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**KAMAN**

rock, R&B, Latin, reggae.... If you want to get into playing reggae—or should I say, a fusion reggae, rock/reggae—the drummer to listen to is Stewart Copeland, who is one of my favorite drummers of all time. *There's* an example of someone taking a little bit from everybody. I used this quote in my video, and I forget who said it, but it's, "Good composers borrow, but great composers steal." You aren't going to be guilty of a copyright infringement if you steal a

drum lick. That's what it's all about. You're never going to sound exactly like that person anyway. Steal from this guy, steal from that guy. One of the most happening drummers I've heard in my life is Sheila E. I heard her on Prince's *Sign "O" The Times* record, and she played a solo that was second to none. *There's* an example of fusing Latin with rock and applying it to the drumset.

**RF:** You said that you should "steal from this one and steal from that one." Who

would be some of the people you have stolen from?

**GB:** One would be Mark Craney. When I was in college, the Gino Vannelli album *Brother To Brother* came out, and I played that album for hours on end every day. To me, he was a combination of Billy Cobham and Steve Gadd. Being able to approach pop music without getting in the way, playing for the song, but playing the hippest possible fills you could ever get away with on a pop record—that's the coolest.

Another guy is Myron Grombacher. When Pat Benatar's first record came out, I remember practicing along with his playing. The thing that hit me the most was the power and sound of his playing. He had big drums and a big, hard attack, and when he went for a fill it was with real authority.

Steve Gadd is another I did transcription after transcription of. I worked on the "Aja" solo and all the stuff off Chick Corea's *Friends* album, and every little thing with Rickie Lee Jones that he would do on his hi-hat.

Another one would be Jeff Porcaro. His groove is incredible, he can just make a tune feel so great. He's got an incredible pocket. Even though I never could come close, I would try to rip off that type of feel.

Buddy Rich is definitely somebody I tried to rip off a lot, and, again, Danny Seraphine with Chicago and Bobby Colomby with Blood, Sweat & Tears. A huge rip-off influence was John Bonham. Nobody could do that kind of stuff the way he did it. Stewart Copeland is another guy I've tried to rip off, and of course Vinnie Colaiuta. Terry Bozzio with Zappa and Missing Persons, Tony Williams with Miles Davis, Elvin Jones, Jack DeJohnette, and big band guys who played with Maynard's band. Peter Erskine—a lot of people might associate him now more with small group stuff. But when I was in college, the group to go see was Weather Report. Peter Erskine and Jaco—you couldn't touch those guys! They were incredible. And the way he played with Stan Kenton's band when he was 18 years old was unbelievable. He could swing like crazy and also rock like crazy. He was a definite hero. I'd go see him play with Maynard, and right after the concert, I'd rush home and sit down

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at my drums and try to think, "How did he play that?" You know how sometimes you hear a solo and think, "Enough already"? Erskine would play a solo, and you'd always want him to play longer. He and Randy Jones and Dan D'Imperio all played with Maynard, and I was kind of a Maynard freak when I was a kid. As far as older jazz guys, Gene Krupa was a big influence, too, and Joe Morello, who played with the Dave Brubeck band, was also a huge influence. Other guys were Billy Cobham, Dave Garibaldi, Simon Phillips, and Steve Smith.

**RF:** During the first interview, we only had the first David Lee Roth album to talk about. What was the difference between doing the first album and the second album for you?

**GB:** The first album came together after we had been a band for only a short period of time. I enjoyed them both a lot, but maybe one of the advantages to the second album was that we had already done a tour together and played a year on the road. Then we came back and collectively and separately wrote music for the record. The first album was produced by Ted Templeman, and it was great getting to work with him, and the second one was produced by Dave and Steve Vai, which was really cool too.

The two albums were different, though. *Skyscraper* was almost more of an experimental album. We were really having a good time and got into using different effects—reverb and digital delays—and studio techniques. We did a song called "Bottom Line," which was an uptempo double bass boogie tune, and Steve and I doubled this line together that started with the lowest tom and went all the way up to the smallest tom with 16th-note triplets. The way we recorded it was really cool, because we would play sextuplets on the floor tom, and then we would use a VSO to change the pitch of the next drum. So we could vary-speed the floor tom to sound even bigger than it was, and it was a 20" already. And we could make the 8" tom sound like munchkin land. It was really different. I was more involved in the writing of the second album, too. My brother and I wrote a song called "Knucklebones," and just being around from the beginning on all the writing was really cool.

**RF:** You said that on the first album Templeman's direction was "no clicks, no electronics, no nothing—bare bones." What was the situation on the second one?

**GB:** It was just me going into a room at Capitol Records in Hollywood and doing the tunes with my Dr. Beat. I just played through each tune, and we added on from there. That was a different approach from *Eat 'Em And Smile*. The new album is really live. The whole band

played together the whole time, and Dave sang with us. My brother played bass live, Jason Becker played all the lead solos live, and the rhythm guitar player, Steve Hunter, played all the parts live. And Brett Tuggle played all the keyboard parts—Hammond Organ, B3—right there on the spot. It was really neat because that's the way we rehearsed it.

There are a lot of different techniques to recording, and they all work and they're all fun, but that was a change of

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pace. I really had a blast doing this record. We got to go up to Vancouver, which was great because we were completely involved in the record. We weren't thinking about putting gas in the car or going grocery shopping. We stayed in a hotel right in town, and we'd walk or ride bikes to the studio. We'd be 110% eating and breathing the album.

The studio, Little Mountain Sound, has a great room. The drums were ultra-large, like the 24" extra-long bass drums. One of the greatest things Bob Rock asked me was, "What kind of sound do you want to go for?" And I said, "Your sound, the sound you've gotten on a lot of the other great albums you've done." He said, "I want to make it your sound too, for your personality to come through. So what would you think of putting nothing inside the bass drums? No blankets, no pillows, no felt strips—just two white heads, one on the playing side and one on the outside." I said, "I think that would be great. It would be real open, low, and powerful." We did that on the whole record. The toms were big, oversized toms—12", 14", and 16" mounted and a 20" floor. All the drums

had white heads on top and clears on the bottom, and they were tuned real low. They were also miked top and bottom. The bass drum was miked not only out front, but up close and also around back by the beater. Of course the snare was miked top and bottom, too, and there were a lot of overheads; there were mic's all through the room.

Also, one of the coolest things they do up there is they have this loading bay that is adjacent to the room you record in, and baffles are used to get a lot of your sound out into that room. The loading bay is filled with mic's also, and when it comes time for kicking in the room sound, they have two tracks that say "bay," and it's an amazing sound. Bob Rock is an incredible producer. The drum sound on this record is by far the best drum sound I've ever gotten, and I think it's the best record yet.

**RF:** No electronics?

**GB:** No, no playing with sequencers or triggering anything. It was just acoustic drums recorded really well. I would really like to also give credit to the engineer, Randy Staub, and the second engineer, Chris Taylor.

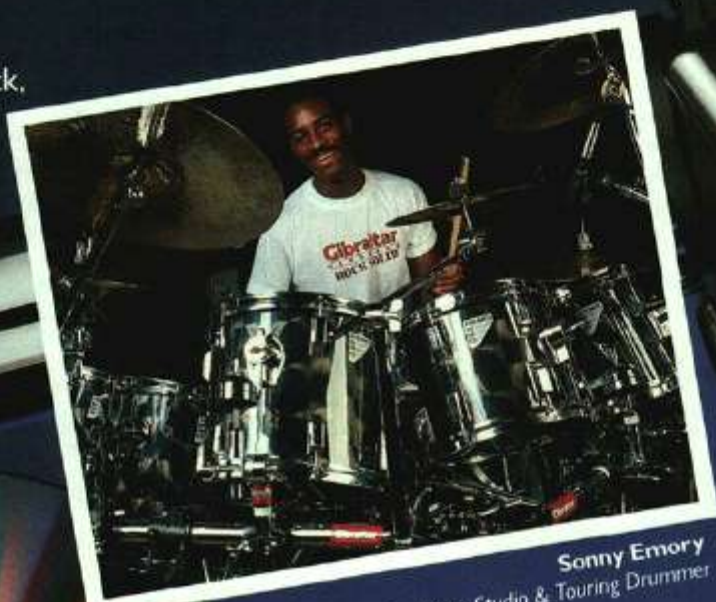
**RF:** A lot of people say it's tricky to record two bass drums.

**GB:** That's a good point. On one of the tunes, which was a double-bass, uptempo boogie tune, we thought maybe I'd use a double pedal on one bass drum, because in the mix you never pan one bass drum to the right and the other to the left. Usually the bass drums are in the middle of the mix. So we thought maybe using the double pedal on one bass drum would sound more even. But with the technique of having no muffling in the bass drum, by the time the second beater hit it, the head was still flopping from the first hit. So we had to scrap that idea and go back to the individual pedals on both bass drums. One of the tricky things is getting them to match. You probably don't want them to sound identical—although you might—but it might sound cool to have them sound different. But one of the hardest things is when you play a fill and you're using two bass drums, they both have to be really even, volume-wise. That's real tricky, but with Bob Rock, I didn't have to think about anything for one minute. Everything was just on the money.

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**Sonny Emory**  
Composer, Studio & Touring Drummer



**RF:** Tell us about some of the tunes on the new album.

**GB:** There's a tune I wrote with Brett Tuggle—of course Dave wrote the lyrics—called "Shoot It." It's got some horn sounds, and it's a medium-tempo, real hard-driving tune with the hi-hat opening up wide on beat 3. There are a lot of different types of tunes, but they're all really hard-edged, a lot of guitar crunch rock. There's a real quick double-bass tune called "Showtime," kind of along the line of Billy Cobham's *Spectrum* album, with little ghost notes on the snare drum. I always wanted to play on a tune that was sort of a double-bass, fast boogie, and I always wanted to try that Billy Cobham approach with the snare going in the middle of the two kicks, using it as a third grace note. I ended up doing that on "Showtime," and it really worked out great. On certain sections, you can double up on the bell of the cymbal and be playing just straight 2 and 4 on the snare while you're playing double bass, doing triplet figures with the right hand. But then there are other parts, like in the verse and B section, where I actually did that Billy Cobham

thing where it almost sounds like three bass drums.

"Baby's On Fire" is kind of reminiscent of a Bonham bass drum figure, like a 16th syncopated thing. That was a real challenging tune to play. It was an exercise in single bass drum chops. We got some really good groove tempos on this record, tunes that just settle into a real great pocket. There's a tune called "A Little Ain't Enough," which has got a really cool chorus and a lot of meat to it. From the minute it starts out, it's just this real heavy guitar, and it's got a 20" floor tom with a snare drum kicking in at the same time, and the bass drum is playing 8th notes. There's a lot of riding on the crash cymbals, which is something I always loved. It's like a Ringo thing. That was one thing I was really glad to be able to get on this record. I used a 20" A crash that doubled as a ride, only I rode on the edge of it instead of up top.

There's also a real cool slow blues tune called "Tell The Truth," and it's a real pocket kind of shuffle tempo. Then there's a tune called "Last Call," which is a really neat shuffle groove that starts

off with a heavy China cymbal figure. There are real cool figures off the hi-hat. "Forty Below" starts off with a four-on-the-floor, uptempo drum intro, and there are some neat backwards snare sounds in there. "Lady Luck" is kind of a slow, sexy kind of tune, and there's another tune called "Hammerhead Shark," which has some big tom breaks.

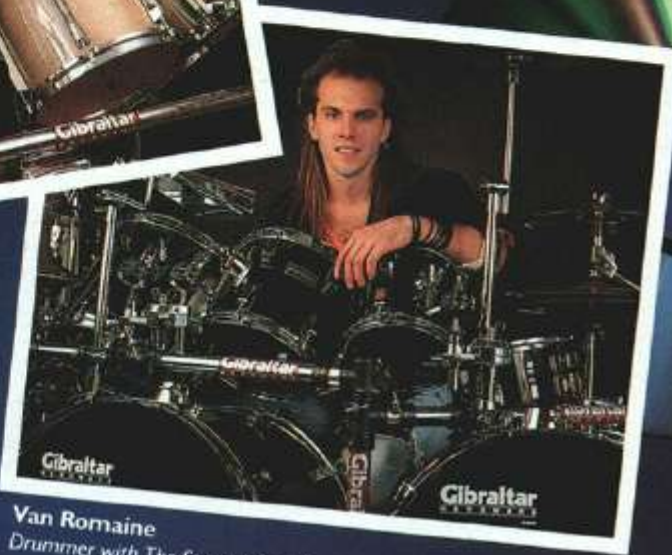
**RF:** You said the material is pretty much on the edge. Do you have to pace yourself during the live show?

**GB:** I try to. On the first tour we started off with "Shy Boy," and on the second tour we started off with "Bottom Line," and both of those were really fast. Pacing is kind of tough when you come right out of the chute, sprinting.

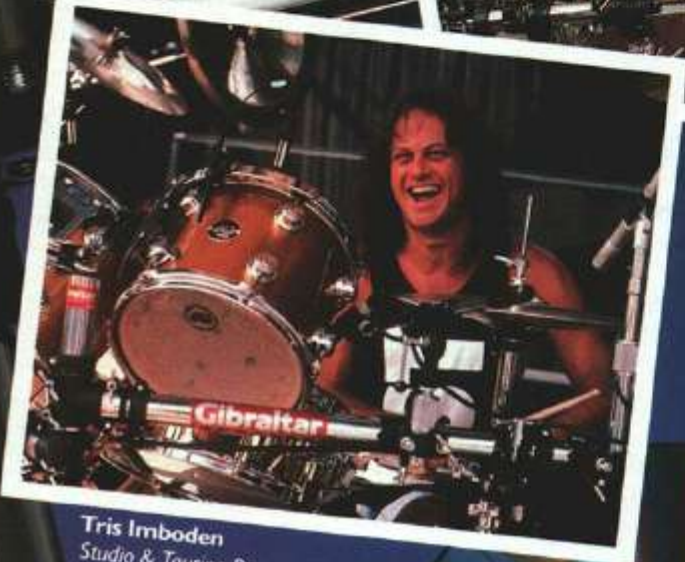
**RF:** So how do you actually pace yourself? Do you have to hold back at certain times?

**GB:** I don't hold back, but breathing is something I've been trying to really focus in on. Sometimes I find myself playing songs and almost holding my breath, which, to me, is the worst thing in the world to do. I'm not the guy to give you any muscular advice, but when you lift weights, you've got to breathe

Omar Hakim  
Recording Artist,  
Studio & Touring Drummer



Van Romaine  
Drummer with The Steve Morse Band



Tris Imboden  
Studio & Touring Drummer

through it. And when you're playing, there are times you're giving it your all, and you can pass out if you're not breathing. There are times when we play outdoor shows in the summertime in 100% humidity. I just got an exercise bike at home. I try to get on it for a half an hour a day, and I've really been surprised at how much it's built up my endurance.

**RF:** Do you do any warming up?

**GB:** Yes. I have a Billy Gladstone practice pad, which I duct tape onto a chair. As dumb as it might sound, I also get my feet going, even though I'm not on a drumset. I've got a couple of DW EP-1 trigger pedals, and my drum tech puts them on a piece of carpeting so they won't move. I'll sit there for a good half hour. If I don't really go through a lot of rudiments, I'll go out and play the first song feeling like I have two boards for arms. If I go out and play really hard without warming up, I almost lose control of the sticks. The same thing goes for singing. I'm not any great singer, but I sing backups, and to go out there right off the bat is impossible.

**RF:** What might some of your goals as a

musician be?

**GB:** To find out a lot more about other instruments, and then try to figure how they relate to my instrument. My friends Myron Grombacher and Stan Lynch have been helping me learn functional guitar. And aside from the valuable time spent learning all those things at North Texas State, I've been taking some piano lessons from Alan Rich, who is Charlie Rich's son. He's an incredible singer, piano player, and songwriter, and he has a great method for teaching you how to play functional piano.

I also go out and do as much playing and listening as I can. In fact, I'd like to mention that Mark Craney has this jam night at a place called Mancini's at Roscoe and DeSoto [in the San Fernando Valley], and there's this drummer I've seen there named Dean Zimmer. He has a disease called Arthrogryposis, and he's in a wheelchair. Nothing has ever inspired me more than watching him. He gets out of his wheelchair—he can't walk—and he hoists himself up onto the drumset. He has these sticks that have a string at the end, and he puts the string around his hand. So much energy goes

into his hitting a backbeat, and he's really good. It just makes you realize you can do anything if you want to. The first time I saw him, I just started to cry. There's nothing that can be more inspirational than that.

Goals? One of my goals is working on becoming a better songwriter. I learned a lot from producing my own drum video, and I love to watch good record producers work. So it's a goal of mine to get more into record producing as well. One of my biggest drawbacks, whether it's in practicing or learning about a new piece of gear, is that I'm hyper and I always want to do a million things, but I can never focus on one. I talk to friends of mine who say, "I sat for ten hours yesterday trying to figure out this sequencer." If I sat for ten hours trying to figure out a sequencer, I'd be going bonkers. It's really important for me to slow down and focus and have patience. If I could have a goal, musically and personally, it would be just trying to live for the moment and enjoy what I'm doing.



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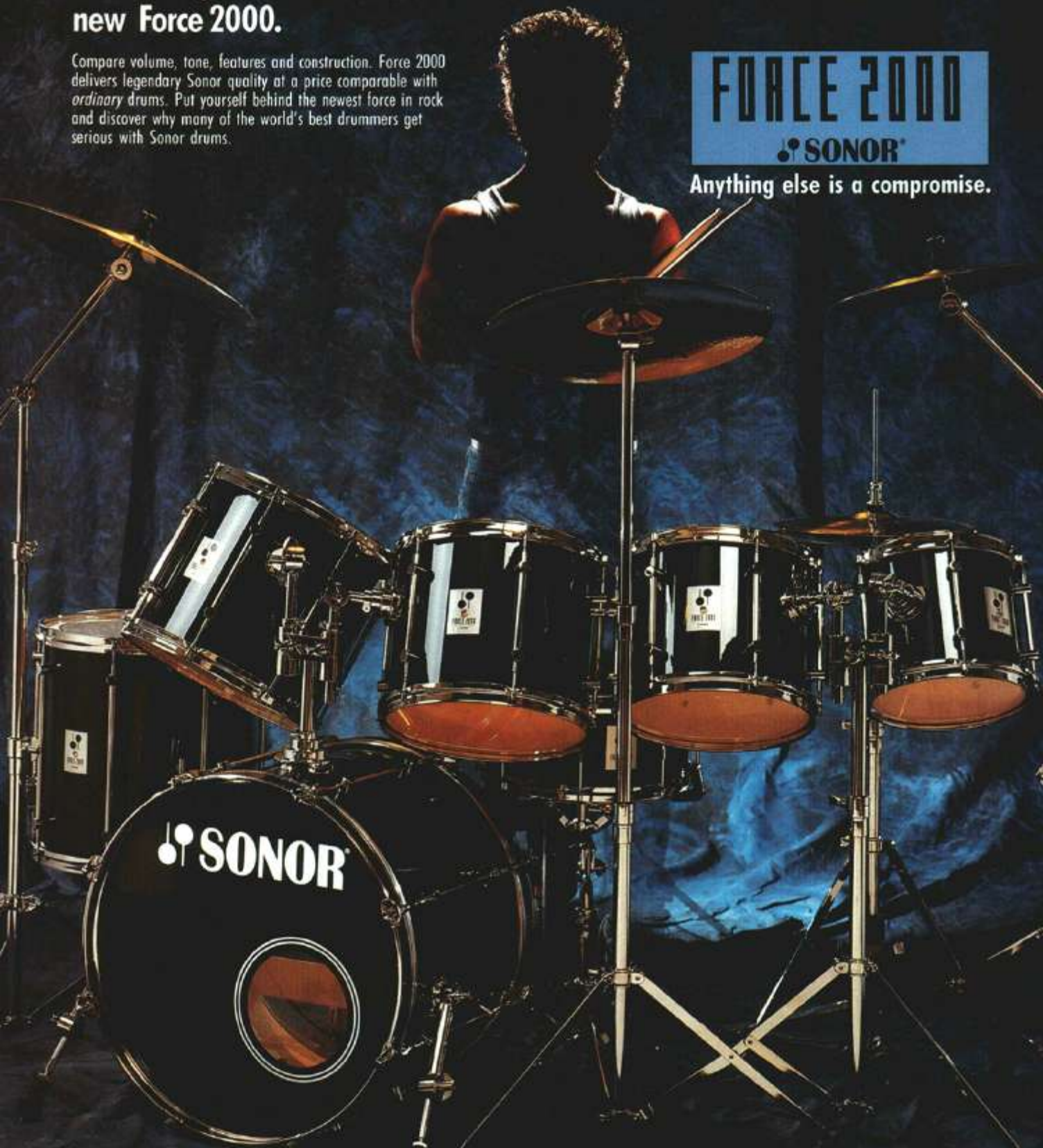
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# Attitudes

by Roy Burns

The word "attitude" refers to how you carry yourself. Your attitude is indicated by your body language, facial expressions, posture, and voice. Attitude also refers to your point of view on any particular subject. Your point of view may be negative or positive as a result of your attitude toward a concept, activity, or situation.

The other day, after visiting a local drumshop, one of my students said, "The owner has an attitude." This seems to be another, currently trendy use of the word. It means that the person is self-centered, egotistical, difficult, obnoxious, or uncooperative. In this instance the owner was difficult and eventually quite rude to my student, due to a misunderstanding over the price of an item.

Attitude can be strange. I know another person who feels that he is *the* ultimate authority on drumming. The truth of the matter is that he is a terrible player who very rarely works a job of any kind. The sad part is that he is actually a fairly intelligent person. He runs his own music store, works long hours, and does have ability. However, it requires a lot of effort to be around this person, because to avoid any argument you are forced to go along with his delusions of grandeur—his attitude.

Drummers who have an attitude are usually just average players who tend to think they're hot when they're not. They act as if they are better than other people, and are often egotistical. As my friend Ed Shaughnessy says, "The really good players are, as a rule, nice people. It's the drummers who are *only pretty* good that are usually a pain in the neck."

Buddy Rich was often described as having an attitude. Stories about his ability to be difficult or extremely independent are legendary. However, as a friend of mine said, "He may have had an attitude, but he could back it up." I tend to agree with

this because Buddy had such an extraordinary career and a staggering number of accomplishments.

If you feel that you are "misunderstood" or that other people are putting you down; if you feel that you don't get enough respect; or if you are often arguing with fellow musicians: Perhaps it's time for an attitude check.

Sit down with a pencil and a piece of paper. List what you see as your greatest qualities—including those you feel are not recognized—in one column. In the next column, list your "real" accomplishments—those that have been, or would be, recognized by others. List recordings you've made, TV shows you've been on, live shows you've played, good groups or bands you have played with, and any famous personalities you have accompanied. If your "greatest qualities" list is longer than your list of accomplishments, you may have an attitude problem.

Next, make a list of reasons why you think famous drummers are more successful than you are. If your list consists mostly of things like money, luck, politics, lying, being a phony, and being arrogant, again you may have an attitude problem.

I'll admit that luck is a factor in every business. What separates the "haves" and the "have nots" isn't only talent and hard work; it's also the ability to take advantage of any bit of luck that comes your way. And this ability to maximize your opportunities has a lot to do with your attitude.

First of all, if you think you are terrific, and yet things aren't going well, you must be honest with yourself. List your strengths and weaknesses—and set about to improve the latter. If you are in a city that offers no opportunity, then consider

relocating. But most of all, try to begin developing a *professional* attitude.

In order to do this, realize that there are a great many good drummers.

Develop a sense of respect for what the great ones have accomplished and try to learn from them. Learn to accept criticism and compliments easily. If you receive criticism, ask yourself if it is valid. If it is, work on correcting whatever the problem is. If you receive a compliment, be courteous and learn to take it in stride as much as you do the criticism.

Be on time! All true professionals are prompt.

Be flexible! Work with the group and other people. You must always adjust whenever the music calls for it.

Be cool under pressure! When the session time is running out or the pressure of a big concert is making everyone tense, don't add to the problem by complaining or blaming

others. Learn to work your way through difficult situations while dealing with pressure.

Realize that you are a person first and a drummer second. You cannot decide how much talent you have or how kind the music business will be to you. However, one thing in life you do have control over is your attitude. People who have developed friendly, open-minded, respectful, *professional* attitudes often achieve more—with less pain and frustration—than do super talents with bad attitudes.

Remember, you can choose attitudes that enrich your life and the lives of those around you. That's a good feeling for any person, no matter what instrument you play or what business you may be in.

"Drummers who have an attitude are usually just average players who tend to think they are hot when they're not"





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# What Makes A Drum Collectible?

by Ned Ingberman

*Editor's Note: Ned Ingberman is the owner and operator of the Vintage Drum Center, in Libertyville, Iowa. He was the focus of a feature story in the March '90 issue of MD, and is an acknowledged authority on the subject of vintage drum equipment. As a result, many questions regarding vintage drums have been directed to Ned via MD's It's Questionable department. Ned's answer to a recent question was so comprehensive that we felt it should be presented as a column unto itself. Here's the original question, and Ned's response:*

*I recently purchased an old drumset for \$10 at a yard sale. The drums are junk except for the snare, which is a 6 1/2"-deep Slingerland. It has a maple outer shell and what looks like a walnut inner shell. The date "Oct. 14, 1958" with an "M" next to it is stamped on the inside. I refinished the drum and fitted it with new heads and a strainer. It has a nice, warm '50s sound. I know it's not a Radio King, but I was wondering if it is a collector's item, and how much it might be worth.*

Frank Alsing  
Porterville CA

Dear Frank,

Yes, your drum is a collectible. The Slingerland *Radio King* has long been in the limelight, but a drum need not be such a classic model in order to qualify as a collectible. More about this later.

Having some photos or a more detailed description of your snare drum and its condition would make it easier to pinpoint its exact value. My ballpark estimate would be \$100 to \$150.

About the stamping inside the shell: "Oct. 14, 1958" indicates the date your drum was manufactured. The letter "M" is one of the symbols Slingerland used for assembly-line purposes. After doing research and also recalling the Slingerland drums I've personally handled over the years, it seems that Slingerland's use of letter symbols varied over the span of the company's manufacturing history. At times, "M" was used to designate a marine pearl finish, but at other times, "P" was used, as well. I've also seen "MP" used on some drums.

Although you speculated in your letter that the drum's inner ply might be made of walnut, since the drum was manufactured in the 1950s, the inner ply would be African ripple mahogany. Slingerland produced walnut shells only during the 1930s. The two woods can be mistaken for one another due to their similar reddish-brown color.

That "nice, warm" sound you describe is a typical characteristic of many vintage wood drums. This richness of tone qualifies a large part of their attraction. Vintage metal drums also have their own distinctive appeal. Many vintage drummers like the full-bodied tonal range of highs and lows these brass-shelled drums have to offer.

Additional factors that determine the collectible appeal and value of a vintage drum are: rarity, historic significance (for



A 1920s-era Leedy bass drum, before and after re-conditioning





**A Leedy 4x14 "Elite" Professional snare drum, with gold/nickel-engraved shell, circa 1920**

example, whether the drum is an expression of the times that produced it), physical condition, preservation of originality, and marketplace trends.

In the past, the collection and use of vintage drums was predominantly focused on a select and limited cross-section of drums, and was enjoyed by a fairly small segment of the total drumming population. However, during the past two to three years, the hobby has rapidly expanded to encompass a much larger scope of drums and many more collectors. I estimate there to be large numbers of historic and beautiful vintage drums sitting patiently in attics, basements, closets, and garages—just waiting to be discovered by a vintage drum lover. It's an exciting and rewarding pursuit that's fast gaining momentum!

So what exactly qualifies a drum as being a collectible, vintage drum? I can only answer that question based on what I see happening around the country. Currently, the mainstream of collecting activity seems to be focused on drums manufactured between the 1920s and 1960s, and also some through the 1970s. Drums produced before or after this time period are certainly being collected, but not on nearly as large a scale.

This brings me to the next important point: A large majority of collectors—regardless of what time period drums they collect—want their drums to be in all-original condition. In their eyes, any alterations to a drum's pristine and historic glory (with the exception of replacing heads and snares) detracts from its collectible appeal and decreases its value. Purely from an investment point of view, a vintage drum in all-original condition is more likely to appreciate in value—and at a faster rate—than a re-conditioned drum. It will also be easier to sell or trade.

Yet, while the advantages of maintaining originality present a strong case, there are instances where alterations actually *increase* the appeal and value of a vintage drum. In the situation of a collecting studio or stage drummer who wants a highly specific sound or look, total originality might only be a secondary priority. In his or her eyes, customizing a vintage drum for the purpose of enhancing its tone quality, mechanical func-



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tion, or cosmetic appeal will add to its value and desirability. It might better suit his or her needs if the drum has had its shell refinished down to the maple, new rims installed, bearing edges re-cut, or hardware re-plated with shining new chrome, nickel, brass, or copper.

So, while the reconditioning route may not be the way to go for most, it may be for some. To anyone considering it, my advice is to carefully weigh the pros and cons before making a final decision. And for those who do recondition their drums, here's a practical tip: Any time a drum's original rims, lugs, strainer, etc. are replaced—but are still in working order—they should be kept and stored away in a safe place! Future sale or trade of the drum could very well depend on having these parts to offer the prospective new owner.

It sounds like you had the confidence to go ahead and recondition your drum yourself. I acknowledge your initiative and adventurous spirit in doing so. Most of the time, I encourage drummers to have a seasoned professional do the job. Unless one has the necessary skills, experience, and equipment, the welfare of the drum could be at risk.

I wish you lots of fun and success in your future collecting and playing of vintage drums.

Photos courtesy of Rob Schmidt, Jim Pettit, and Vintage Drum Center



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CARL ALLEN

continued from page 29

check out some different stuff."

**BM:** Does it require some gear-shifting to go from a gig with Randy Weston to a gig with Freddie Hubbard?

**CA:** Yeah, it requires a different dynamic and another kind of sensitivity. With certain people you play with, you realize that you have to take more of a leadership role and be more aggressive. With other people, you have to lay back more and try to be more of a follower. Freddie's the kind of a player where he wants you to be battling with him, so you just have to be out there all the time. That's one way of playing. Same is true with Jackie and George. With Randy it's a little different. He kind of sets the mood for what's happening, and you just kind of deal with that mood. You help put some colors in there and try to shape what's going on, but it's more of a cooperative thing.

To be perfectly honest, with Randy I've never really been all that comfortable, only because his knowledge and information about rhythms has always intimidated me. When he calls me for a gig I think, "Man, didn't you hear that last gig?" Sometimes I don't know what to play with Randy. So whenever I do a gig with him I really have to get in the shed and check out some other kinds of records and stuff, check out cats like Ed Blackwell and some hand drummers. Because Randy's hearing more rhythms. One time I asked him, "Man, where'd you get all this stuff from?" And he said, "It's colors, baby. It's nature." And I'd think, "I don't know how to deal with that, so I'm gonna have to check out some other stuff to figure out how to get inside of that."

**BM:** You've also played some gigs with Don Pullen recently.

**CA:** Yeah, he's another example of a great cat who can play anything. I'll have to publicly admit that prior to working with Don I was pretty ignorant to what he was doing. I mean, I just didn't know much about that style of music, what some people call avant garde. And when I met him, we rapped and hung out a little bit, and my level of respect for him shot up immediately, because he's very knowledgeable—not just about what he plays but about R&B and bebop and a lot



Swing is such a powerful thing, and there's a whole lot to be dealt with. Years ago, it was a big thing to superimpose all these time signatures over other time signatures, and I was trying to get into that. And then I bought this Ben Webster record with Harry "Sweets" Edison and

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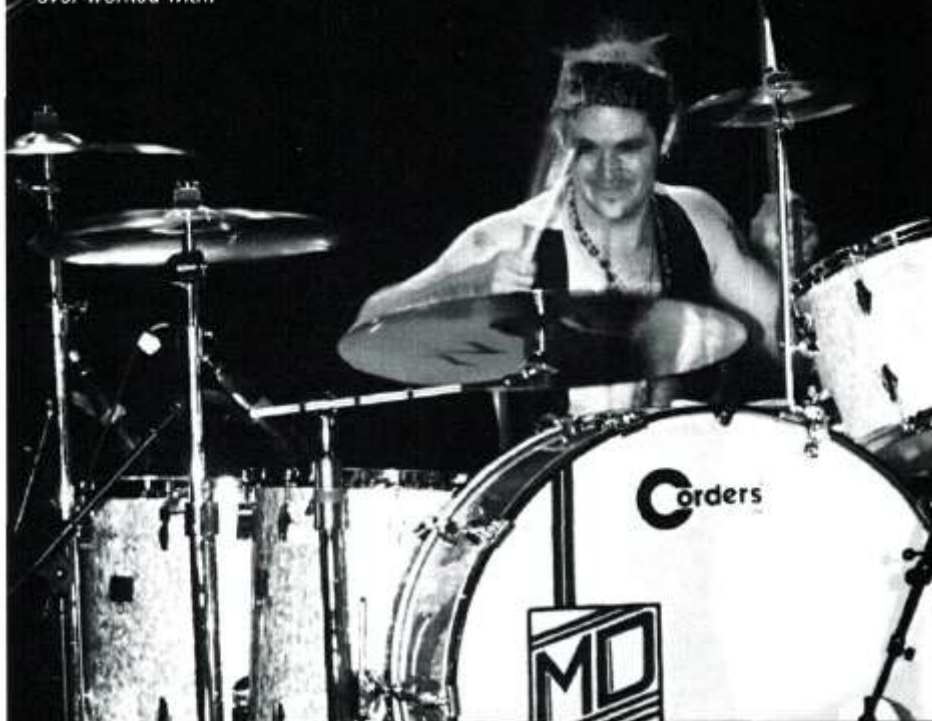
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this drummer named Clarence Johnson on it. These cats we're just swinging, man, and it's none of that superimposing beats thing. When you just deal with some basic swing as a foundation, you can be doing all kinds of other stuff on top of that. When you hear Billy Higgins, man...there's the basic foundation of swing on the bass drum and on the cymbal, but when you really check him out you see there's a flurry of things happening on another level. And that's what I'm trying to get to.

**BM:** What are you working on toward that end?

**CA:** Right now I'm in the process of going back to all the fundamentals and basics, just trying to learn how to play slow, learning how to play clearly and distinctly. You know, music is so much a reflection of other aspects of your life. When you think about playing, it's like talking. When you talk fast it's easier to lie your way out of something to your lady. But when you say it slow she goes, "Now wait a minute. What are you saying? You're lying!" [laughs] It's the same thing when you play. When you play slowly you have to seriously deal with some stuff, like the cymbal beat. It's not just about dropping the stick on the cymbal and letting it bounce at a fast tempo. It's about breathing, about trying to bring life into what's happening.

**BM:** Would you say your touch has gotten lighter in recent years?

**CA:** I think so. Lighter and quicker. As I've gotten older I've checked out more cats, and I think I understand the importance of relaxing more. When I was younger I had a very big misconception of swing. Before I had really checked him out live, I had this impression of Elvin Jones bringing his arms all behind his head, feet kicking up in the air like a wild man. But when I checked him out, I saw his touch. It was really gentle in a way. So I had this misconception that you had to play hard all the time. Shortly after I got with Freddie, he used to talk to me about trying to learn to play with more intensity. And I mistook that for more volume. But he would say, "No, that ain't it." He would never tell me what it was. And I'd say, "Well, what is it?" And he'd say, "Just deal with it. Work it out." So I would check cats out more, and then one day he

said, "Now it's getting there."

That's something that I'm still trying to deal with now, trying to develop a sound and have character in my playing. That's the thing about all these great musicians I've played with. They all have character to their playing. They have substance. They have life. And that's me, man. That's something that Jackie told me: "This music will humble you." Soon as you come off the bandstand, some little girl there or somebody will be telling you how great you are. Just go home and put the record player on. You'll get humbled real quick if you have any kind of sense at all. When I was younger, man, I used to listen to people. They'd tell me, "Man, you can really swing!" And I'd be all excited, "Yeah? You think I can swing?" And these cats wouldn't know swing if they swung, you know? So you go through that ego period and learn to deal with it before you can really get to the music.

**BM:** What was your attitude going into your recording project, being a band-leader and organizing the session?

**CA:** The organization part I really enjoyed because I enjoy putting things together. When it came time to dealing with the particulars of the session, I wanted to have creative control. I wanted to make sure the musicians were paid well. I wanted everyone to feel good about being there. Everybody got paid for rehearsals, for parking...cats who came in from out of town were put up in hotels and given a per diem. You know, I wanted to let them know that I appreciated their presence and participation and that I respected their artistry. So I tried to create more of a cooperative feeling. I didn't want it to sound like a drummer's record. Most traditional drummer's records have a drum solo on every tune, and I didn't want that. I wanted to have a group feeling. These are some very talented cats, and they all write too, so I wanted to showcase them a bit more.

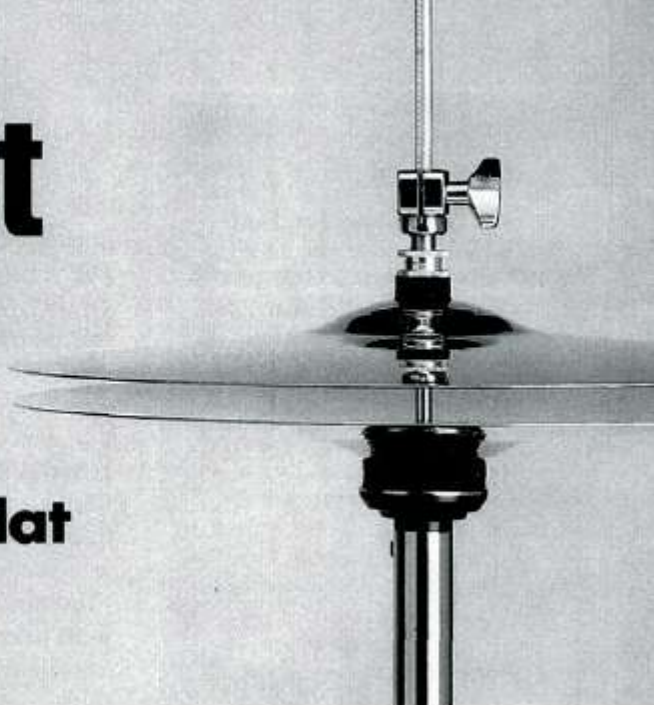
**BM:** *Dreamboat* features some of the best Roy Hargrove and Kenny Garrett on record.

**CA:** Thank you. I was really concerned about everyone blending together well. Their attitude was like, "Look, we love you, you're our friend, we're here to make some music together." That was



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the overall feeling of the session. I've done a lot of dates before, but that was the first thing I had done on my own, so I was a little nervous. But they all made me feel real comfortable. Jim Anderson, the engineer, was a great cat, he was very supportive. I've had some run-ins with some engineers. They want to tell me how my drums should sound. They want to make my drums sound the way *they* hear them. But Jim's thing was, "I want you to sound the way *you* hear it." And that was very much appreciated too.

**BM:** One of the most interesting cuts on *Dreamboat* is your composition "Allud-

ing To." Can you comment on that?

**CA:** I was trying to give a feeling like it was alluding to several different things, like it was alluding to 3/4 in one section, to 5 in another section—just trying to create something that will make people think. And I wanted to have a feeling of tension in the melody, like something exploding.

**BM:** What about "The Sacrifice"?

**CA:** I was thinking about some Horace Silver kind of stuff with that tune. The title means several different things to me. One, it stands for what all the musicians have gone through, the sacrifice

that musicians make in life to deal with this music. And two, it's about just what people go through every day. Everybody's making a sacrifice for something. The melody has a 12/8 kind of feel to it, and then at the end I was trying to have some movement with the chords, kind of like Jazz Messengers-style. Whenever I write tunes I try to bring out or pay respect to some of our masters, and that tune was definitely a tribute to Horace Silver and the Jazz Messengers.

**BM:** On the opening of that tune you're playing on toms. I also noticed the other night with Jackie McLean that on your

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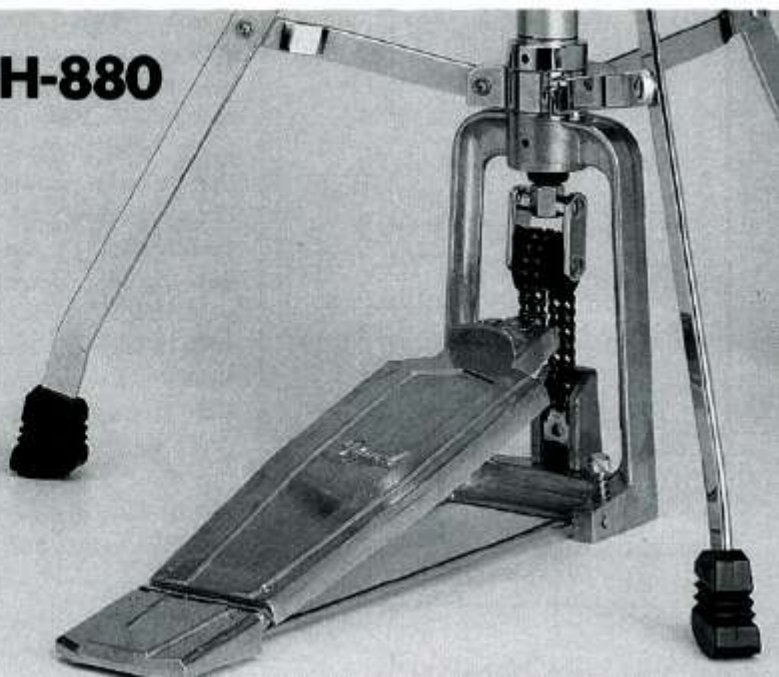
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solo you went for the toms right away. Is that becoming a signature of yours as opposed to coming off the snare?

**CA:** Again, everyone expects you to play on the snare drum. But I try to look at the instrument as a whole as well as separately, in terms of giving each drum a certain amount of respect and attention. So I hear certain tonal colors and it reminds me of certain things. For that tune I went for the toms because I had been checking out a lot of African music and some hand drummers, and I was thinking in that direction. So when I went to the toms on there, I was thinking about coming out front with something.

**BM:** What about the title cut from *Dreamboat*?

**CA:** Well, the guy at the record company wanted something like Herbie Hancock's "Maiden Voyage." So when I wrote that I was working on something where you have chordal movement off one note. And obviously, I was thinking about Herbie on that tune.

**BM:** You do some nice brushwork on "I Remember Clifford."

**CA:** Yeah, that was funny, because we hadn't planned on doing that. The coproducer from the record company suggested it, but Roy didn't know the tune. So I called Benny Golson from the studio and said, "Benny, listen man, we're in the studio, we're getting ready to do 'I Remember Clifford,' and they don't know the changes. What are they?" He gave us the changes over the phone, and we recorded it. It was a great feeling to be able to do that, to call the cat who wrote the tune and get the real changes. Not like fake book changes, but the real changes. It was fun playing that tune. And again, I'm just appreciative of the commitment these guys gave me, because I've been on dates where guys are like, "Man, let's get the tune over with."

**BM:** When you do shedding, do you work much with brushes?

**CA:** Yeah, there's an art to playing brushes. I really respect somebody who can really deal with brushes, like Louis Nash, Kenny Washington, Marvin "Smitty" Smith, and some other cats. I

would like to be able to play a whole gig with brushes and have the audience not even know that it's brushes all the time. Certain cats got that touch, man, where they can play with brushes and it almost sounds like sticks, but it's not as abrasive. So I'm trying to work on brush technique more, just trying to get a smooth, consistent stroke. That's one of those things I just have to work on all the time.

**BM:** Are there any records you check out for the ultimate brushwork?

**CA:** Anything that Philly Joe or Max did, the stuff that Elvin did with Trane and Duke—just a pile of stuff, man. Interestingly enough, I checked out some old records with Buddy Rich. He had great brush technique. Then the cats who really had it were cats like Papa Jo Jones, Baby Dodds, Sid Catlett...checking out those old records, man, where cats were playing on those calfskin heads—it sounded like they were using a broom, man. The sound is so broad.

**BM:** I noticed you also like to play with mallets.

**CA:** I want to get deeper into playing with mallets on the set, in a different way than just for colors and stuff. I'm talking about playing some time with mallets. I really want to write for percussion ensemble. I think by doing stuff like that it helps you hear different stuff on the set as well. When I was going to school in Green Bay I was a classical percussion major, so I would spend a lot of time on the mallet instruments. It's something I would love to do one day, incorporate vibes and timpani. I'd also like to do something with percussion and brass.

**BM:** What about your most recent project, *Piccadilly Square*?

**CA:** The personnel is slightly different from *Dreamboat* in that Vincent Her-ring replaces Kenny Garrett on alto sax, and Freddie Hubbard plays two tunes on the record, including the title tune. On that date I felt more comfortable than on the first one. I wanted to have the same type of feeling on the session, where cats felt like they were very much a part of the date as opposed to just contributing as sidemen. And even to



this day I still hold the same philosophy. I don't want it to sound like a "drummer's record."

**BM:** Who are some other important drummers for you?

**CA:** One cat who meant a lot to me was Mel Lewis. He was such a bad cat. Some people don't understand Mel...how he controlled a big band. He did this album in 1960 with Eric Dolphy where he sounded like Elvin, man.

One of the reasons I love Mel so much is that he was the cat who brought me out here to the East Coast. I was going to school in Wisconsin, and he offered me the gig with Count Basie. I was 18 at the time and I respectfully declined, because knowing where I was at, I wasn't ready for the gig. He recommended my going to William Paterson College because he had taught there some years earlier. So he was always very encouraging to me. And to this day it still saddens me, man, to not have Mel around. Again, cats may not like Mel because he could be abrasive and he spoke what he felt and didn't sugarcoat anything. But at the same time, you have to respect him because he had a pile of knowledge and information.

Mel was the first one who taught me, nonverbally, about playing the bass drum. I saw him at the Vanguard with the big band one night. And throughout the set I kept hearing this—"doom, doom, doom," and I'm thinking, "What's that? Must be tourists—somebody stomping his foot." But I got closer and I saw the pedal hitting Mel's bass drum very softly. And right there is when I understood the importance of playing the bass drum so that it's *felt* more than it's heard. It was very soft, but you could feel it throughout the whole band, and it gave the band a focal point and gave his sound more bottom. I couldn't believe it, man. I was like a kid all over again when I saw that. It was deep.

Then I started peeping other cats. At the time, Philly Joe was still alive, and I started watching for that bass drum thing. I also started noticing Jimmy Cobb and Art Taylor and other cats doing that. They were doing it all along,

but I wasn't aware of the importance of it until I saw Mel that night. It was like an epiphany.

**BM:** How were you thinking about the bass drum before that?

**CA:** I was just thinking that it was just an accent instrument—something loud. At the time everyone was talking about "dropping bombs," and I'd be dropping these big, huge bombs instead of just trying to lay down some swing on the bass drum, trying to get some forward motion happening on the bass drum. So I wasn't really thinking about playing it. My concept was coming more from the perspective of playing to be heard—as opposed to playing to *be felt*, which is really what the music is about. You want to create *a feeling*.

**BM:** What other things did you pick up on from watching drummers around New York?

**CA:** One of the things that I've been concentrating on for the past couple of years is trying to get my breathing together when I play. Watching a lot of older drummers made me aware of that. For instance, when saxophone players play, they'll be taking breaths between the notes. Whereas drummers often feel like they don't have to breathe, they can just play. And what happens oftentimes is you play and you don't concentrate on your breathing, but your adrenaline level rises, and then you start overplaying. You start rushing, and then you start playing too loud because you don't get a chance to regroup. Your mind and body are not together.

I found that by breathing within your own phrases, it keeps you more focused, more in control of what it is you're trying to execute. And it helps you hear more. It helps you get a better understanding of what's going on around you. Otherwise, when the adrenaline level rises and all these other things start happening, you're just trying to keep your breath, just keeping some wind to keep playing. And you miss all these things that are going on musically.

**BM:** From examining so many players over the years, did you pick up any hi-hat tips?

**CA:** Yeah, just from watching cats like

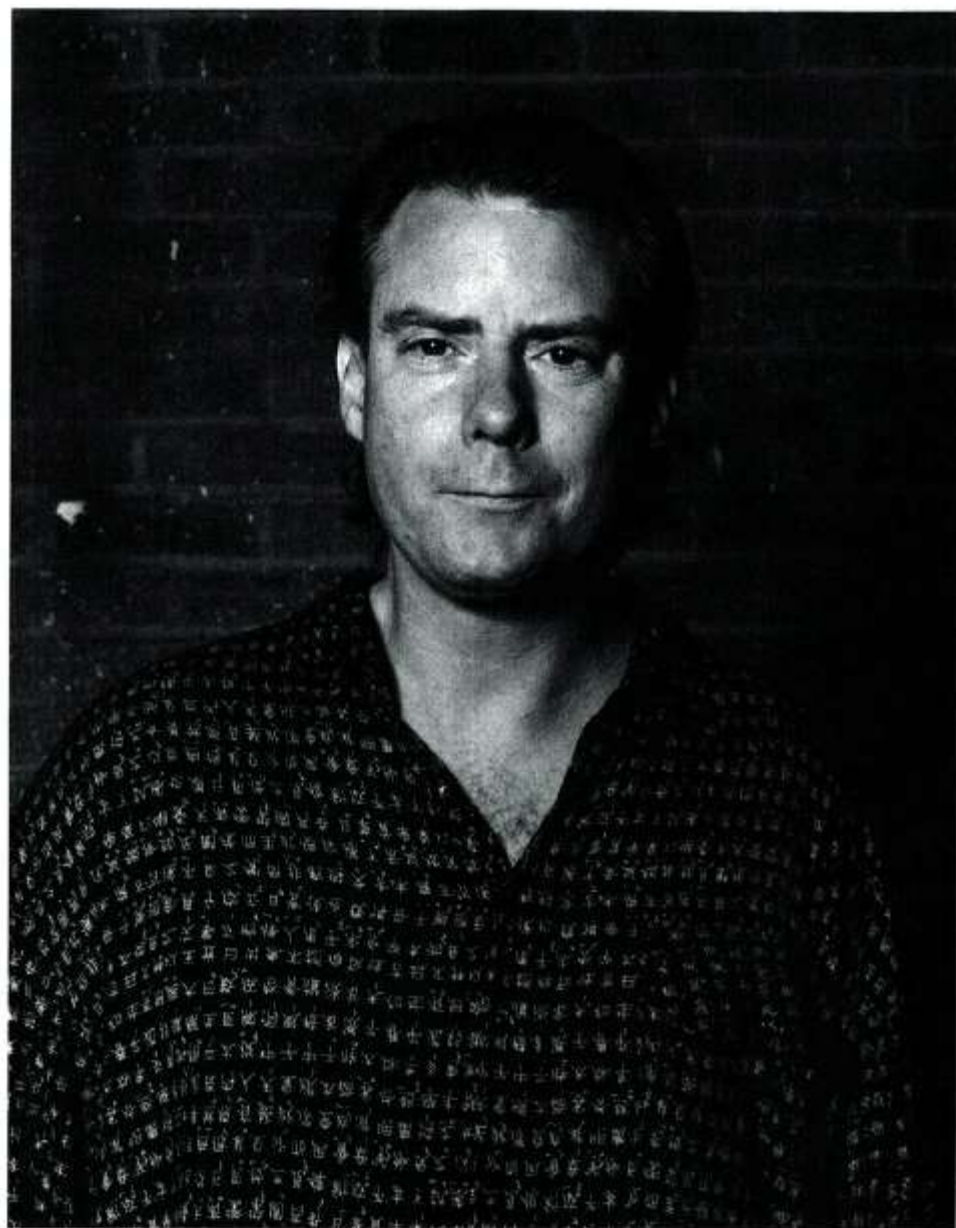


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Philly Joe and Louis Hayes, you understand about having a consistent sound on the hi-hat with your foot. With a lot of younger cats, their feet dance around on the hi-hat, and they have a very inconsistent sound. Whereas with a lot of the older cats, it's like their playing is already edited. They've already weeded out all of that excess movement and they just know how to deal with what needs to be dealt with. Sometimes I'll put on the tape recorder and just play the hi-hat and ride cymbal for 40 minutes, then listen back to it and try to listen for the inconsistencies of sound. That's very much a part of a drummer's swing...the consistency of the sound.

**BM:** Have you changed your setup over the years?

**CA:** Not much. I've just changed the height of my cymbals a little bit. I made them just a little higher. Before they were so low that when I would go around the toms I would have to play off the drum, I couldn't play into the drum because the cymbals were so low. I'd come up and hit the cymbals. So I put 'em a little higher.

I've always felt that your setup should be an extension of yourself. You should be able to get around the set very easily. You shouldn't have to do somersaults to hit the ride cymbal or do a flip or something to hit a crash. It should be a natural thing. There is something I've been experimenting with for the past couple of months, using a piccolo snare on the left side by the hi-hat. I've only taken it out with Jackie. I have a thing for snare drums. I just love them, so I'm just using this piccolo snare as another voice. Sometimes I'll use it as a tomtom, and other times I'll just use it as a second snare drum sound.

**BM:** What kind of piccolo snare is it?

**CA:** Ludwig. All the drums I play are Ludwig. And I go back and forth from a wood piccolo to a metal. Most of them are 4x14, but this is a 3x13, so it's got a higher pitch. And I change the tuning of it depending on how I feel. It's still in the experimental stages. I keep changing it, just trying to hear something different. The strangest thing is, listening to a Monk record is what made me start hearing that. He would do double stops

up at the top of the register. I just started hearing it and started experimenting with it.

**BM:** What's your attitude about equipment?

**CA:** I enjoy playing a kit with a few toms and a few cymbals. And then I'll go and hear Al Foster or Billy Higgins or Ben Riley, and they'll have a little four-piece set. I mean, I went into Bradley's one night, man, and Ben Riley sounded like he had 20 drums up there. But he just had a snare, bass drum, hi-hat, and two cymbals, and it was killing, man. It was swinging.

**BM:** Did you alter your cymbal setup at all over the years?

**CA:** A little bit. I'm using all Sabian cymbals, all hand-hammered. I'm using five cymbals. The thing about that, though, is sometimes I'll have all that up there and only play two cymbals for the whole night. And maybe only one or two toms. It depends on how I feel and what I hear. And I think that's good compared to the way it used to be. I used to have this thing where if I saw a lot of drums I felt like I had to play all of them.

**BM:** How important is getting the right sticks for gaining control?

**CA:** Very important. You have to get sticks that fit your hands. A lot of drummers will go through different heads and different cymbals trying to get a different sound, when all they should do is check out some different sticks.

**BM:** Did you also go through a period of trial and error with heads?

**CA:** Yeah, I went through a big thing with heads. For the longest time I was using Remo, and then when I switched to Ludwig drums I started using their heads just because it made more sense. After Ludwig I went to Compo heads, which is a Japanese company. I saw Tony Williams with some and I loved them. Then a good friend of mine, Tommy Campbell, started telling me about these Evans heads. So I tried them out, and they were exactly what I was hearing. The heads are very consistent. I'm using clear heads on the bottoms, the coated *Uno 58s* on the top, and *Generas* on the snare drums. And they've got some new heads that are really hip on

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**BM:** I see you have some special cases.

**CA:** Yeah, cats are really envious of them because theirs keep falling apart. I've had these same cases for years. They're called Protektor cases. They're made out of hard plastic, and they just hold up under all kinds of weather. The fiber cases will buckle up when they get wet. When I was using fiber cases, I would have to put coats of shellac on them just to make them stronger. But these cases have been cool. The name of the company that makes them is XL Percussion, and they're based in Fort Wayne, Indiana. They also make a bass drum pedal called a *Black Max* pedal that you can adjust a million and two different ways. I love it.

**BM:** Getting back to your career for a moment, what's it like trying to get over as a bandleader these days?

**CA:** Well, in some ways it's a Catch-22 situation. You're a leader and you want to take a band out on the road or get a record deal or whatever, and all you hear is, "You're *unknown*." Well, how does one become known? It's like, you can't do B unless you've done A. And you can't do A unless you've done B. It's some backwards stuff, man. That's why I'm always trying to talk to cats about the importance of learning about business and promotion and marketing. Because until we understand that this is a business, we're just going to be in the dark. I mean, this music is not on MTV So we have to take it to the people.



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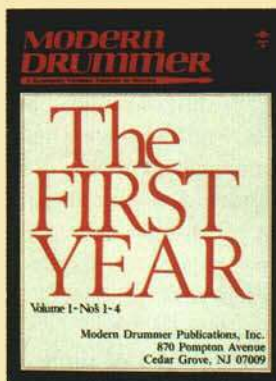
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# Kenny Aronoff: "Authority Song"

■ Transcribed by William F. Miller

This month *Rock Charts* takes a look at one of the most solid rock drummers playing today. No one plays a groove like Kenny, and over the past couple of years he's made a name for himself recording with many diverse artists. Of course Kenny is best-known for his work with John Cougar Mellencamp, and for this transcription we thought it might be interesting to go back a few years to a classic performance of Kenny's with Mellencamp, "Authority Song" (from *Uh-Huh*, Riva 814450).

According to Kenny, "Authority Song" was greatly improved by two little notes he was—or actually *wasn't*—playing. "When we started rehearsing the song, I was playing straight 8th notes on

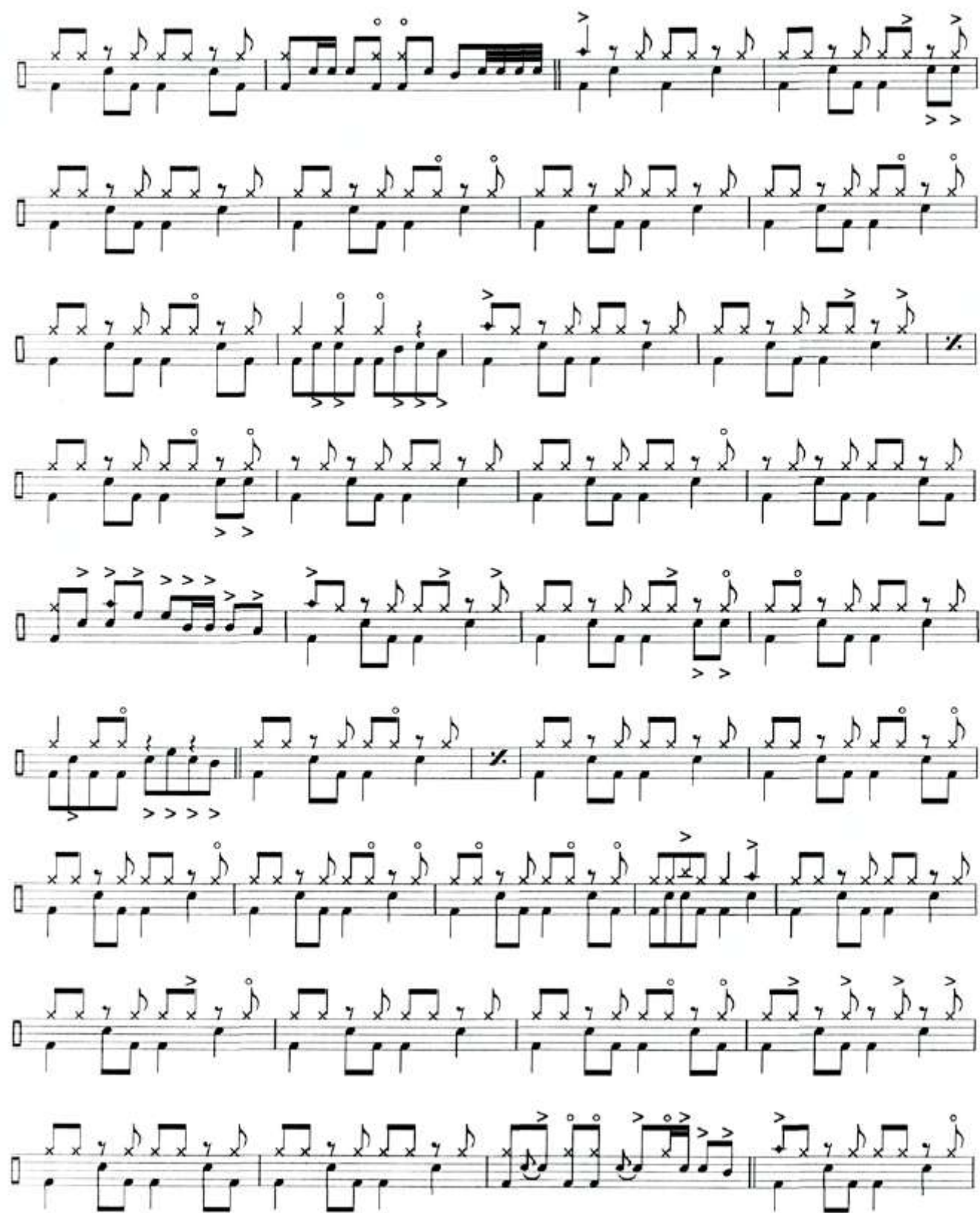
the hi-hat all the way through, but it sounded too heavy. Then I tried the ol' Charlie Watts beat, not playing the hi-hat on 2 and 4, and the song completely changed! All of a sudden the song had some life, and because of the way the hi-hat part sounded, *everybody* phrased their parts a bit more on the upbeat. That's the beauty of playing something simple: Every little thing you play has a lot of impact on the music."



$\text{♩} = 160$

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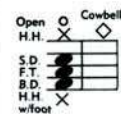
9-staff musical score for a drum solo. The notation uses 'x' for notes and 'z' for rests, with various rhythmic values and accents. The score includes a key signature change to one sharp (F#) in the fourth measure of the first staff. The piece concludes with a "fade out" instruction.



# Variations On The Songo

by Tom Van Schaik

## MUSIC KEY



The songo is a contemporary Afro-Cuban rhythm that is finding its way into the jazz/rock field as a fresh approach to playing time. The main characteristic is the offbeat bass drum pattern against the constant quarter-note pulse on the cowbell. The traditional songo looks like this:



The following variations work best if there is a floor tom positioned to the left of the hi-hat. If this is not possible, one can substitute the bell of the ride cymbal for the cowbell, allowing the left hand to move more easily to the floor tom in its standard position. Work the patterns slowly, never sacrificing smoothness and relaxation for speed.

Examples 1-4 take the traditional songo and begin to move the left hand around the drumset between the hi-hat, floor tom, and snare drum.



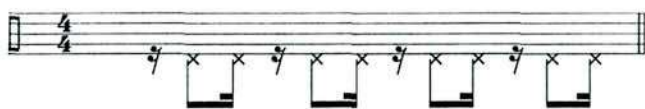
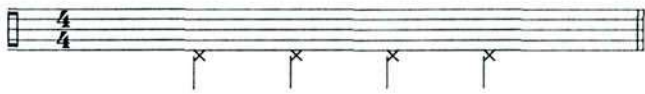
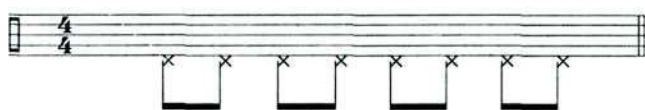
In examples 5-7 we begin to reverse the snare and bass drum parts of the original pattern.



In the next two variations, the entire pattern is shifted half a beat to the left. This places the cowbell on the 8th-note upbeats. These variations also sound good with the right hand playing the bell of the ride cymbal. These sound more "commercial" because the bass drum is on the downbeats.



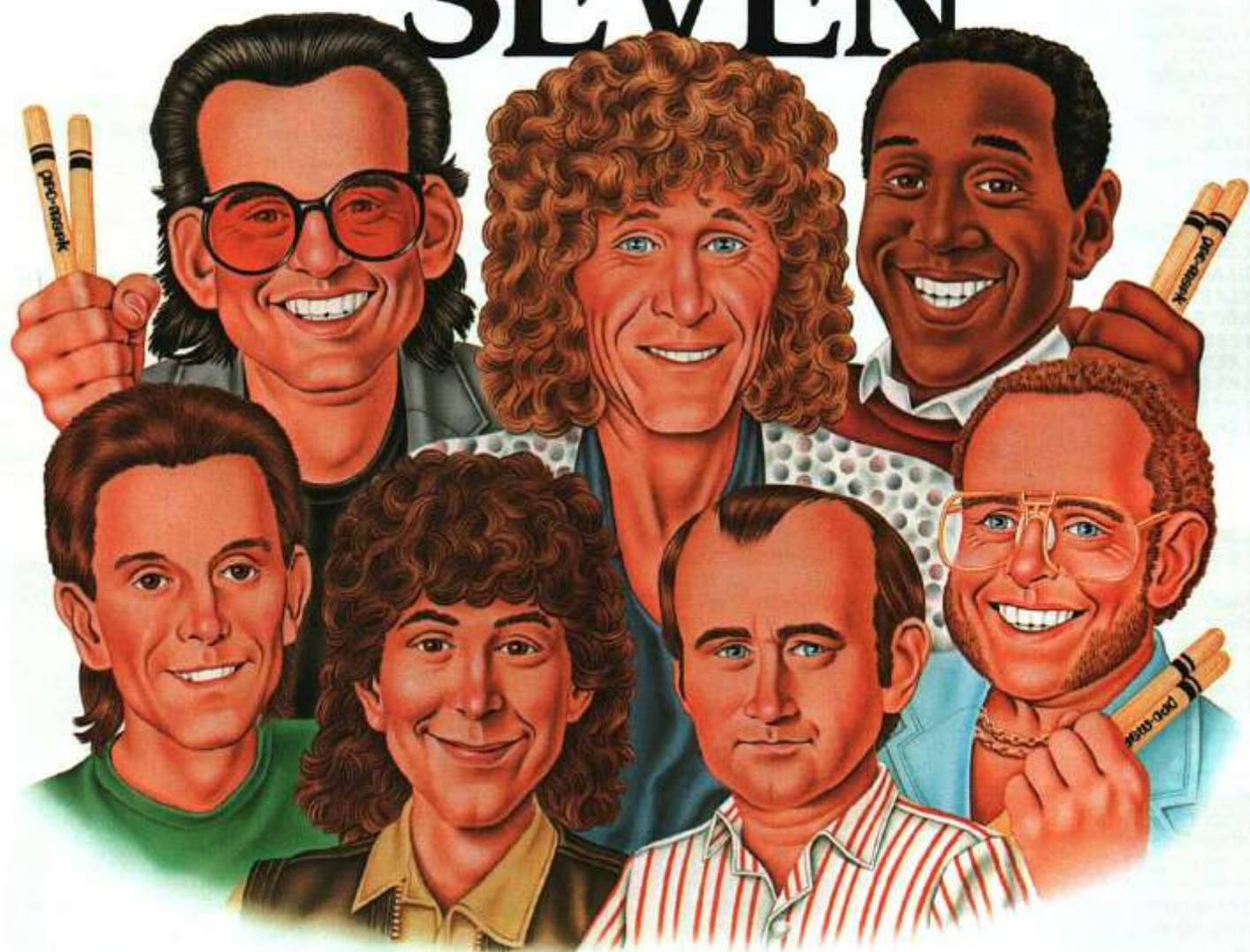
Four-way coordination patterns can be created by adding these optional hi-hat foot patterns to the songo variations.



There are endless variations possible on the songo. Try playing the quarter notes with the left hand to build greater independence, moving the pattern over one 16th note at a time, or substituting the hi-hat (played with the foot) for any bass drum or snare drum part. The most important thing to bear in mind is to keep a relaxed, smooth motion around the drumset. If one attempts to play too quickly too soon, there will most certainly be tightness, and the groove will be lost.



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## TINY KAHN

continued from page 33

is responsible for the sound of a band.

"Tiny was my teacher, he knew so many things. He enhanced my harmonic concept. I wasn't too smart harmonically in those days. Tiny made me aware of the value of 'choice' notes, of making music within the chord and even a bit outside the chord, long before playing 'outside' had become a factor in jazz.

"We went with the Georgie Auld Sextet in 1947. It was the first bebop small band led by a leading figure from swing music. Tiny was the main writer and the most potent influence on everybody. I remember Georgie used to put a microphone back where the drums were. After we had played our choruses, Tiny would scat a chorus or two and wipe everybody out.

"Tiny was into the Basie groove as a drummer. But when we played bebop, he was into that too. He didn't have the great hands and the intensity of feeling of Stan Levey, but he was the most musical drummer I had ever encountered. He was the originator of *musical* modern drumming. By this I mean he made every stroke and bass drum sound or accent pay its way. Everything he did grew out of the music and was an extension of it. Mel Lewis came right out of Tiny Kahn. At the very least, they were very close in style. Of course Mel added

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embellishments later on.

"Tiny certainly was an unsung hero. Only at the end was his reputation beginning to parallel his importance as a musician. He was bright, responsible, well-read, and well-informed. I'll tell you one thing, he always put me on the right track. During the year and a half that I played with him on Georgie's band, he gave me enough to think about for 10 years."

Kahn and Stan Levey also were close. Early in his career, Kahn learned a great deal from Levey. As time passed, Levey not only derived great pleasure from Kahn's playing, but even adapted some of his friend's innovations and enhanced his own work as a result. At the beginning, however, Kahn sought Levey out.

**STAN LEVEY** (former drummer who helped modernize drumming in the 1940s and '50s. Levey worked with Dizzy Gillespie, Charlie Parker, Woody Herman, and Stan Kenton, among others): "I got to know Tiny during the Henry Jerome days. He was a huge man with a big heart. That was the main thing—a big heart. Tiny was warm and real and had an enormous talent.

"He also had a very inquisitive mind. Tiny wanted to learn everything about playing jazz drums. There were certain fills I used with Dizzy Gillespie and Charlie Parker that he liked very much. Most guys wouldn't come up and say: 'Could you teach me those fills? How do you go about playing them?' But he was very direct and asked me to show him how to execute those things. I showed him everything I knew, which was miniscule.

"I liked Tiny the minute I met him. There was nothing to dislike. I hadn't come across too many guys like him. When I went to visit him at his home in Brooklyn, I realized how thoroughly dedicated he was. Some guys practice. But with Tiny, music was a 24-hour thing.

"I really got to hear him play with the Chubby Jackson band. I thought he was fabulous. His work had a loose, soft feeling—he had that soft pulse, with no hard edge to it. He moved drummers in a musical direction, as opposed to basing his concept on purely percussive ideas. He was not unlike Dave Tough. Tiny was

a fine musician who listened to a band and responded to it. Because he was a writer, he had a better idea than most drummers what ground had to be covered to make music work. Tiny knew how to control the time, the tempo, the sections of the orchestra—the ensemble as a whole.

"The day he died I was in Europe with Stan Kenton. We were about to begin a concert in Copenhagen for 30,000 people in this huge auditorium. Somehow the word got to us that Tiny had died. Well, I just totally broke down. I finally pulled myself together and thought, 'I'll play this one for Tiny.' He gave me and other drummers so much."

Everyone I talked to about Kahn emphasized his humor and generally affirmative attitude. The late Al Cohn, a marvelous tenor saxophonist, composer, and arranger, who could be quite funny himself, remembered that aspect of Kahn.

**AL COHN** (played and wrote for large and small bands, including those led by

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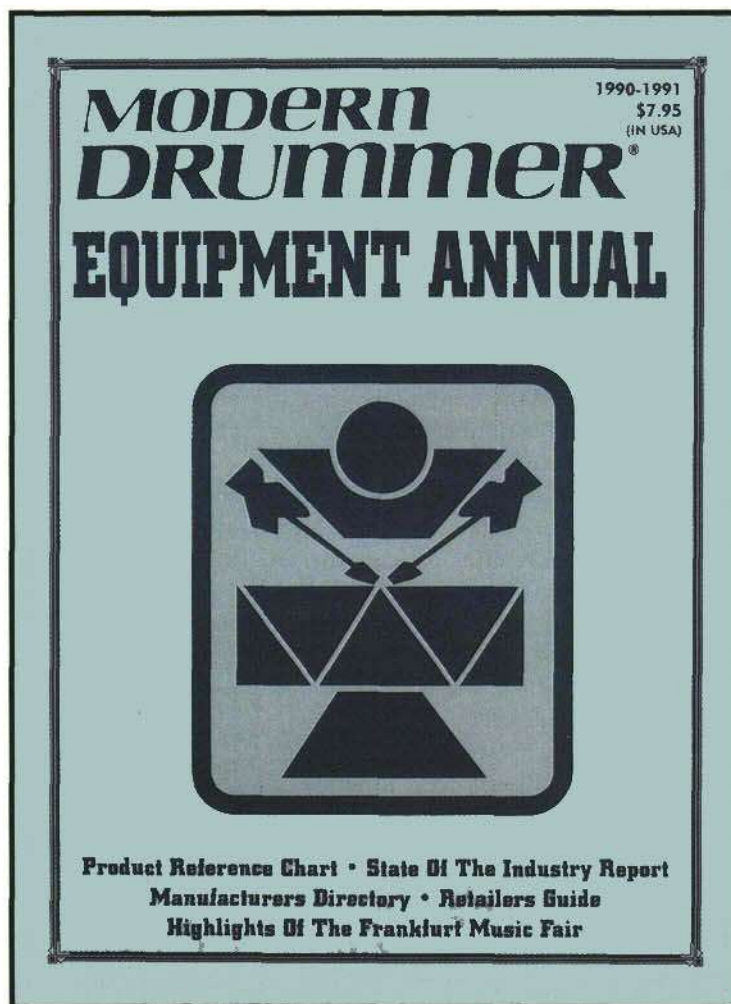
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Woody Herman, Artie Shaw, Georgie Auld, Buddy Rich, and Elliot Lawrence. Cohn had a long, fruitful association as a performer with saxophonist Zoot Sims): "Tiny was a great guy to hang out with. I guess it was his attitude about life that was funny. One thing that he did that broke everyone up was an imitation of Eleanor Powell, the dancer in MGM musicals in the 1930s and '40s. If you can imagine this picture: Here was this over six-foot, three- to four-hundred-pound guy dancing in a small space. He had a way of walking, tapping his toes and clicking his heels at the same time, that was unreal and so funny. Tiny was just naturally humorous. When people who knew him get together, they smile, thinking about him.

"Everyone loved Tiny's playing. Buddy Rich, who was not the most enthusiastic supporter of modern drummers when they first came on the scene, loved Tiny's drumming. He was his favorite among the younger guys

because he was so swinging. For a period of time, Tiny worked in Buddy's band as second drummer. We all couldn't wait to play with him. We liked Buddy. But Tiny was our man."

**CHUBBY JACKSON** (bassist and bandleader. He has worked with Charlie Barnet, Woody Herman, Lionel Hampton, and Charlie Ventura, and with his own large and small groups): "Today's drummers would be interested in Tiny's setup. He only used four drums—snare, bass, one tom-tom on the bass drum and another on the floor—a hi-hat, and two cymbals. He went back to basics. He didn't overplay. He could create colors, maintain energy, and vary intensity with just a small set of drums. His work was cooking and burning, and yet it had a modern feel to it. He played drums like he was making a really good arrangement. His performances had structure, flow, ups and downs, overall balance, and undeniable swing.

"Tiny could be counted on. He always showed up on time, ready to do his best. I never saw him display anger or open hostility. He was always positive. Though he would deny it if he were here, he was the person the other New York newcomers looked to for guidance."

The drumming side of Kahn's talent inspired a number of his contemporaries, notably Phil Brown, who replaced him in the Stan Getz Quintet in 1951. Brown provides excellent insight into his style, having heard him at various points in his career.

**PHIL BROWN** (former drummer who worked with Stan Getz, Charlie Parker, Buddy Rich, and Claude Thornhill): "Tiny was the first drummer to play matched grip almost all the time. The only time he deviated was when he used brushes. The timpani or matched grip really worked for him. He was able to get around the drums. And he had his

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own sound when he played solos. It was an "even" sound, made possible by the matched grip. Many of the other guys performing at that time didn't get the strokes to sound as even as Tiny did.

"Tiny had a very unusual way of playing. What made him different? He didn't play four on the bass drum. He didn't emphasize the 2 and 4 clicking sound of the hi-hat. On the up tempos with Stan Getz—I caught him at the Showboat in Philadelphia shortly before I joined the band—I noticed he left beats out of his ride rhythm in the right hand. He was a precursor of today's rock drummers—they also skip beats in the ride rhythm. To balance things out, he would comment with his left hand; it was almost like playing a paradiddle between the cymbal and the snare drum. He *divided* the ride rhythm, bringing into play the cymbal and snare drum and even the bass drum. By breaking up the rhythm around the set, he got a sense of flow that made the time more exciting and

provocative. The way he used his left hand on the snare drum and the way he played accents on the bass drum increased the rhythmic interest of his performances.

"Tiny capitalized on not having great technique and created his own sound and style to compensate for this lack. Some drummers said he performed the way he did because he couldn't play the dotted 8th and 16th rhythm in fast tempi. Perhaps. But what he did was better, different. He was the first 'free' drummer in that he didn't strictly stick to playing time. What he thought and how he executed his ideas may have been dictated by lack of technique. But he proved necessity is the mother of invention.

"There was great honesty in Tiny's playing. He wasn't trying to copy or create within a certain school of performance. He wasn't into commenting on Max Roach or being like him. He was just pure Tiny Kahn. He was one of the

great drummers. I'm including everyone in this comparison. He thrilled me back then."

**MEL LEWIS** (the late drummer and bandleader who headed his own band for 24 years. Before that, he played with Stan Kenton, Terry Gibbs, and Ben Webster, among many others): "My relationship with Tiny began when I came to New York from Buffalo with the Lenny Lewis band in the late 1940s. I had heard and liked the recordings Tiny made with Red Rodney for Keynote. He came to hear me at the Savoy Ballroom. Soon after that, I returned the compliment and went to hear him with the Boyd Raeburn band in Central Park. That was the first time I saw a big band drummer with a 20" bass drum. I realized that's all you need. The sound Tiny got out of the small drum was more than sufficient.

"When we got a chance to really talk during an afternoon of drinking egg creams on Broadway, I realized we liked

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the same drummers and the same sort of music. Apparently we were two of a kind. He even used low-pitched cymbals—same as I did.

"Tiny brought a looseness and the improvisational feeling of small-band drumming to the big band. I heard him every time I could. I loved what he did/He played great fills and lead-ins to explosions that kicked a band along. He knew how to use space and was never too loud. He was a straightforward player with his own kind of chops. Tiny was great in big bands and as effective in small groups. His way of playing just worked!"

**STAN GETZ** (one of the great jazz improvisors on the tenor saxophone. Has headed his own groups since the late 1940s): "He's one of my favorite drummers of all time. He was the closest thing to Sid Catlett. Tiny would musically get underneath you and lift you up. Most drummers batten you down from the top. And he wrote as well as he played. He personifies the saying 'the good die young.' He was just the best."

It is clear that Tiny Kahn was loved and admired by all who knew him. The future seemed boundless when the end came. The young and those who paid him little heed in life should seek out his recordings, notably with Stan Getz (Roost), Chubby Jackson (Columbia), Charlie Barnet (Capitol), and Georgie Auld (Roost), and become familiar with the work of a giant cut down at his height.



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## RECORDINGS

**JAN GARBAREK GROUP**

—*I Took Up The Runes*. Polygram 843 850-4. J. Garbarek: tn, sp sx. Manu Katche: dr. Nana Vasconcelos: perc. R. Bruninghaus: pno. E. Weber: bs. B. Wesseltoft: syn. I. Antte Ailu Gaup: vcl. *Gula Gula / Molde Canticle Part 1 / Part 2 / Part 3 / Part 4 / Part 5 / His Eyes Were Suns / I Took Up The Runes / Buena Hora, Buena Vientos*.

"Runes" are old Norse folkloric song/poems. The spirituality, mystery, and dignity of this Lapp music is the inspiration for Norwegian-born saxman/composer Garbarek's latest release. This well-conceived and -realized disc, which should be listened to as one complete work, opens with a melody influenced by the runes. The following five pieces expand and digress from this idea while keeping the tone and chant-like quality intact. The closing three pieces round off the work by merging the folkloric into a

larger universal scale. While mesmerizing and quite beautiful, "Runes" avoids the comfortable, meandering, navel-dwelling that plagues so many similar yet unsuccessful attempts. Even at its most placid moments, the music remains engaging, inventive, and definite in direction.

The amazing Brazilian percussionist Nana Vasconcelos strikes the perfect balance between spontaneity and composition, while shifting between coloration and rhythm. And the pairing of Nana with Manu Katche's drumming makes a seamless symbiotic team. Manu is an unexpected yet ideal addition to Garbarek's usual quartet. Those who have only heard him in pop contexts will be treated to drumming that is strongly rhythmic, yet that gently allows for plenty of ensemble breathing space, giving Garbarek's band more kick than on his previous ECM releases. Several tracks feature drum-

ming that avoids preconceived ideas of hi-hat/snare/bass "kit-like" parts. Manu's feel is so strong that he doesn't need a backbeat to prove his point. The cross-cultural meeting of these fine musicians makes for some very rich and heart-felt music.

• Jeff Potter

**MICHAEL FORMANEK—**

*Wide Open Spaces*. Enja R2 79648. M. Formanek: bs. Jeff Hirshfield: dr. G. Osby: al, sp sx. M. Feldman: vln. W. Krantz: grt. *Edge to edge / Yahoo Justice / Fantasy Scape / Wide Open Spaces / The Sage / Cloak And Dagger / Wild Dreams / Coffee Time / Home, At Home / Slothdancing / Outerlude / Razing Walls / Ancestral Voices / edge To Edge / Open Door*.



The Wide Open Spaces, the New Frontier, the offer of new possibilities. These play-for-keeps, cutting-edge boys are boldly digging into that virgin ground. Like master tightrope walkers, this band continually strains the edge of danger, flirting with the crucial balance, yet remaining in absolute control. Composer/bassist Formanek, with his fat, driving acoustic bass lines, leads the band through his tight, angular, eclectic, and unpredictable song forms. Surprises abound, but not for the sake of a jolt;

they all make perfect sense. Amidst all this "serious" playing, however, the band also knows how to be fun and even rather funny on tunes like "Coffee Time" and "Slothdancing."

The problem: How should a drummer approach this music? Swing Pattern #2 and Funk Feel #4 must be left at the door. Jeff Hirshfield does an admirable job of approaching this unique material with fresh ears. He makes unconventional choices work, such as his fast bop-ish burning behind a slow, legato, long-toned melody. Or his "Coffee Time" snare groove that's like a...like a New Orleans, neo-Monkish, Sun Ra...oh forget it! No use in categorizing this music. A salute to all involved in this disc for their passion and pure originality.

• Jeff Patter

**THE MEETING. GRP GRD**

-9620. Ndugu Chanler: dr, perc. A. Johnson: bs. P. Rushen: kybd. E. Watts: sx. *Groove Now And Then / Walk Your Talk / Steppin' Out / And / Think About It All The Time / The Meeting / African Flower / Joyful Noise / Cherry Blossom / Lowness / Element Of Mystery / Virgin / Tango*.



Bands that are made up of musicians who spend a lot of time doing studio work tend



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Steve Jordan





to have bad reputations—and often, deservedly so. The players spend so much time playing background music for other people that everything they play ends up sounding like backing tracks. They sometimes seem to have forgotten how to simply go for it.

Happily, *The Meeting* is an exception. This album has the feel of a live jazz session; the musicians sound as if they are playing what they want to play, without having to worry about a producer or artist looking over their shoulders and telling them to save it for their own record. This is their own record, and they make the most of it. The styles range from R&B to funk to straight-ahead jazz, with a little Latin influence here and there. And a sense of joy pervades throughout.

Ndugu Chancler sounds particularly inspired, attacking the drums with a gusto that will probably horrify "E-Z listening/new age" types. His fills are spirited, and he even verges on overplaying in a couple of spots. (But in this day and age, a little human enthusiasm making it onto a record is quite refreshing.) It's primarily his strong R&B/funk feel that gives this album its drive. Ndugu especially shines on the shuffle feel of the first cut, "Groove Now And Then," and the final track, "Tango," on which he solos over the rest of the band's comping. For those who are weary of drummers whose technical perfection overrides their sense of groove, check out Chancler on this recording. The chops are there, but the feel dominates.

•Rick Mattingly

**EVELYN GLENNIE**—*Rhythm Song*. RCA Victor RD 60242. Evelyn Glennie: perc. National Philharmonic Orchestra, B. Wordsworth: cond. *Etude In C, Op. 6, No. 10 / Robbin' Harry / Rhythm Song / Berceuse / The Flight Of The Bumble Bee / Czardas / Mexican Dance For Marimba No. 1 / Mexican Dance For Marimba No. 2 / Maple Leaf Rag / A Little Prayer / Black Key Study / Michi / Introduction & Rondo Capriccioso, Op. 28.*



For those fortunate enough to have heard Evelyn Glennie in concert, this disc will be cause for celebration; for those who have not had the privilege of hearing her live, *Rhythm Song* will be cause for discovery. While Glennie is accomplished in many areas of percussion, this disc focuses on her mallet playing, with an emphasis on marimba. The 13 tracks provide a good variety of styles and tempos, ranging from marimba works by Musser and Stout to arrangements of pieces by Faure, Saint-Seans, and Chopin. There is also a nice balance between solo performances and works with orchestral accompaniment.

Although there is ample proof here that Glennie possesses considerable chops, one is never overtly aware of her technique due to the high

degree of sheer musicality she projects. Evelyn favors medium mallets and lower registers on the marimba, which allows her to bring a great deal of warmth to an instrument that often sounds cold. On her own composition, "A Little Prayer," Glennie evokes organ-like tones from her rosewood bars, and she is able to avoid the usual brittleness on "The Flight Of The Bumble Bee." Even when performing rags on xylophone, her sense of phrasing and dynamics keep them from sounding ricky-ticky, as is typically the case when these pieces are performed by mere "speed freaks." Glennie plays fast, but she also plays with feeling.

One of Glennie's strongest assets is her knack for bringing fresh interpretations to whatever she plays, whether it's something that was written especially for her, or a piece from the standard repertoire that has been performed thousands of times (such as the Musser "Etude In C"). While some artists' first solo albums merely show the promise of great things to come, Glennie's premier recording serves to document great musicianship that has already arrived.

•Rick Mattingly

**BALAFON MARIMBA ENSEMBLE.** Shanachie Records 67002. Leslie Crisp, Nancy Durham, Lynette Figini, Otto Gyax, Gray Mercer, Daniel Scollard, Carey Sirianni, Ann Takamoto: mrm, perc. *I Already Have A Husband / Nhamo / Caderas / Taireva / Temerina / Amatoto / Nhimutimu / Mashamba Nzou.*



Formed in 1981, this eight-piece, Portland, Oregon-based group delivers a timely testament to the energy and emotional power of traditional African music styles. Using only acoustic instruments, the ensemble cooks up an interesting dish of songs and rhythms derived from the Chimurenga style of the Shona people of Zimbabwe ("Nhano"), the soukous style from Zaire ("I Already Have A Husband"), and the Zimbabwean kwanangoma style ("Amatoto"), among others.

The balafon is an African instrument made from strips of wood, which, when struck with mallets, produces bell-like tones similar to those of the marimba. The ensemble uses five of them—a bass, a baritone, two tenor/altos, and a soprano. When coupled with more familiar percussive instruments such as congas and timbales, the results are impressive. Almost all the tracks on the record possess an earthy, often spiritual quality to them, not to mention potent rhythms that must make this music soar in a live setting.

•Robert Santelli

Critique continues on page 102



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## BOOKS

### GOOD VIBRATIONS

**My Autobiography**

**by Evelyn Glennie**

**Publisher: Hutchinson**

**20 Vauxhall Bridge Road**

**London SW1V2SA**

**England**

**Price: £12.95 (U.K.)**

Not only did Evelyn Glennie achieve a high degree of artistry on a variety of percussion instruments before she was 25 years old, she did it in the face of something that should have prevented her from being a musician at all: deafness.

*Good Vibrations* supplies a few clues here and there about how Evelyn achieved her greatness, but they are often hidden between the lines. Glennie's life started off in a totally non-extraordinary way. While she dabbled in various instruments from an early age, including piano, guitar, and clarinet, she was definitely not brought up as a gifted musical prodigy coached by the finest teachers. Glennie first noticed hearing problems at the age of eight. By age 11 she was using powerful hearing aids, but eventually they were of no use at all. It was around age 12 that she gave up clarinet (which seemed to cause pain in her ears) and decided to take up percussion, simply because she was fascinated by the instruments.

While one can imagine the agony that must come from a musician's realization that she is losing her hearing, Evelyn does not dwell on this in her book. She does explain the battles involved with convincing people that she could still be a musician, and the struggle her parents went through to keep her from being sent to

a special school for the deaf. But aside from one brief mention of an angry outburst at her mother, brought on by Evelyn's frustration during the time she was starting to go deaf and was fighting to keep up in school, Evelyn tends to play down her deafness.

On the surface, one can suspect that she is purposely evading the subject. Indeed, she complains in the book that people are often more interested in her hearing loss than in her musicianship, and she tries to avoid being publicized as "the amazing deaf percussionist." So one expecting page after page of agony and angst is going to come away puzzled. But perhaps the answer is in Evelyn's denial of her affliction—or more accurately, of her denial to let it stand in her way. If her life is like her book, then she simply doesn't have time to sit around feeling sorry for herself. There is too much music to be learned, too many teachers to study with, too many instruments to master.

Above all, the lesson to be learned from Evelyn's life is to *go for it*. She has let nothing stand between her and her goals, from the time she left her cozy home in Scotland to live in London and attend the Royal Academy of Music (sort of like leaving the Midwest to live in New York City), to her trip to Japan to study with marimbist Keiko Abe, to her journey to Brazil, where she became a member of an *escola de samba* and played tambourim in the *Carnaval* parade. Her story is a testament to the power of focussing on the positive.

•Rick Mattingly

### HARDEST DRUM BOOK EVER WRITTEN

**and**

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**Featuring The Inside Story**

**by Joel Rothman**

**Publisher:**

**J. R. Publications**

**170 N. E. 33rd Street**

**Ft. Lauderdale FL 33334**

**Price: \$5.00 (each)**

In the early '70s, Joel Rothman was a prolific author of drum books. Most of them followed the same basic format: He'd pick a specific topic—anything from rock bass drum beats to jazz coordination—and write every possible permutation of selected rhythm patterns. While one might argue that some of his topics did not really call for entire books (*Two Measure Jazz Breaks Phrased In Three*), one could never fault him for not being complete.

Recently Rothman's output has been considerably less than it was in the '70s, but a few books have appeared here and there. His two most recent releases follow a format that will be familiar to anyone who has used his books in the past. *The Hardest Drum Book Ever Written* features five-way coordination with four limbs.

And just how does Rothman achieve that? Well, first you should know that this entire book is based around the "disco" technique of playing open hi-hat on the offbeats, with snare drum on 2 and 4. (Actually, all of the patterns in the book are in 2/4, and the reader is supposed to either repeat them or join two patterns together for a 4/4 bar.) But rather than play the hi-hat with the right hand and the snare with the left (or vice-versa), Rothman suggests that

the open hi-hat offbeats and the snare drum backbeats can all be played with the left hand (just like Gary Chester did in *The New Breed*). Once you are playing hi-hat and snare with the left—which Rothman refers to as "two-way coordination with one limb"—you then add the right hand playing ride cymbal, the right foot on bass drum, and the left foot closing the hi-hat pedal on downbeats. This adds up to five-way coordination. Over 300 two-beat patterns are given, which, in all honesty, could do wonders for one's coordination—at least, as far as this "disco" pattern is concerned. Having worked with Jim Chapin's second book and Chester's *New Breed II*, I'm not convinced that this is really the "hardest drum book ever written," but it would probably offer most drummers a challenge.

*Rock & Rolls Featuring The Inside Story* is devoted to incorporating double-stroke rolls into fills. In his typically complete fashion, Rothman covers 5-, 7-, 9-, 11-, 13-, and 15-stroke rolls. The "inside story" part of the title refers to rolls that start on the second or fourth 16th of a beat, as opposed to rolls that start on a downbeat or upbeat.

To me, these fills are somewhat military-sounding for contemporary rock, and I would tend to recommend this book to a rudimental snare drummer before I would advise a drumkit player to study it. However, for anyone interested in perfecting double-stroke roll technique—for whatever purpose—this book has plenty of material to work with.

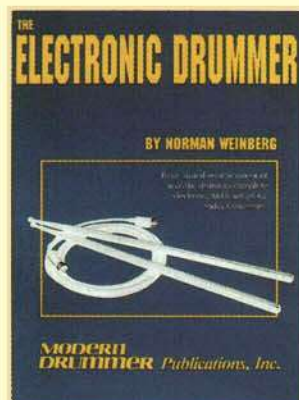
•Rick Mattingly

Critique continues on page 104



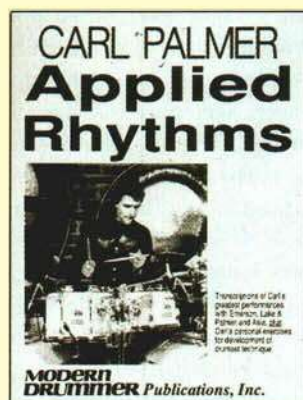
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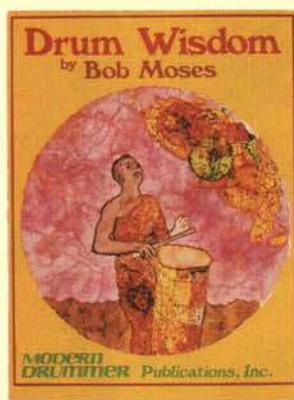
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## Applied Rhythms



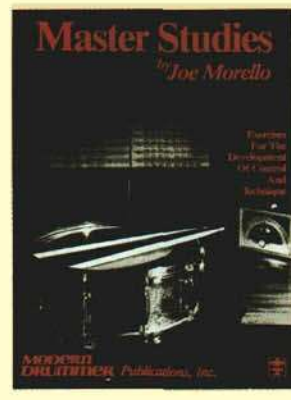
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This book contains transcriptions of ten of Carl Palmer's most famous recordings, and also includes Carl's personal exercises for drumset technique.

## Drum Wisdom



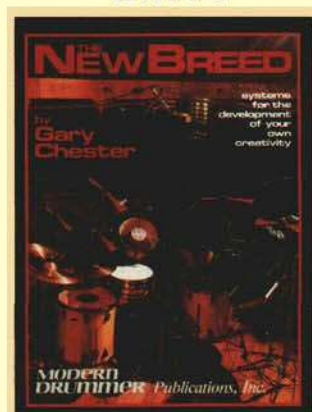
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## Master Studies



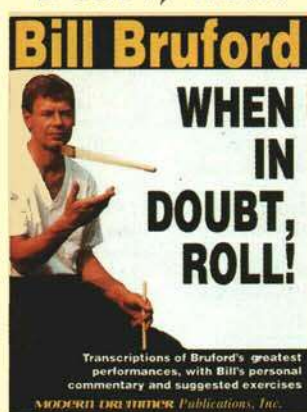
by Joe Morello  
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## The New Breed



by Gary Chester  
This is not just another drum book, but rather a system that will help you develop the skills needed to master today's studio requirements.

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## VIDEO

### JASON BONHAM

Star Licks Master Series

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Los Angeles, CA 90064

Distributed by

Hal Leonard

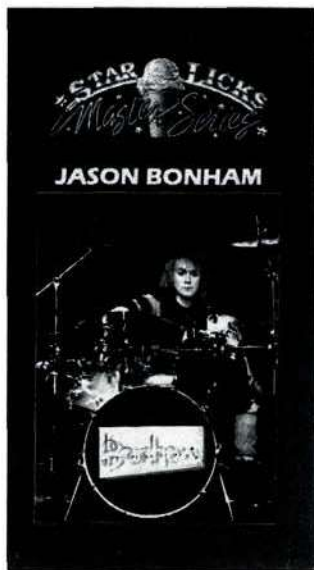
7777 West Bluemound Road

Milwaukee, WI 53213

Time: 60 minutes

Price: \$44.95 (VHS only)

John Bonham died more than a decade ago, but his legacy lives on through his son, Jason, in the form of the band Bonham, and now through one of the latest drumming videos from Star Licks. Jason blends techniques his father made famous with Led Zeppelin with techniques of other personal influences in what is more of a showcase of



Jason's style than a true instructional video.

Jason discusses drum sounds, timekeeping, laying down a groove, and creating

fills. But he rarely gives more than a vague example of how he achieves any of it. A booklet included with the video helps viewers keep pace with Jason's playing. Graphic numbers on the video to correspond with numbered examples in the booklet, though, would have made it easier to follow along.

The best parts of the video are Jason's performance and drum sound. Everything he plays comes out punchy and tasteful. He deliberately avoids settling into a "boring" 2 and 4, showing different ways to screw around with a standard rock beat. He later shows off some cool licks and fills in a jam session with fellow members of his band. Excellent lighting, camera

angles, and split-screen shots adequately show hand and foot movement.

Jason admits on the video that "explaining [his licks] is actually tougher than playing them," and this proves to be true. Also, some of his advice is a bit questionable. His opinion is that drummers should learn to groove before learning rudiments. But rudiments, such as paradiddles, are essential to emulating some of his examples.

If nothing else, this video gives a good close-up look at how one of today's rising rock drummers approaches the set. And you'll pick up a few useful licks in the bargain.

•Mott Pieken



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## DRUM TECHS

continued from page 37

work the next day, and I hobbled around until we had a break for two and a half weeks.

Marsh says that setting up for Thompson is a great deal easier than it was for Prince, when he was setting up Sheila E.'s gear. "The shows on the last Prince tour took me a long time to set up because Sheila was on a revolving riser. She had triggers in all her drums, and I had controls for her electronics where I sat below the stage. There were also electronics on the other end of the stage, plus timbales and percussion. Then there was *another* set on the side of the stage. It was percussion everywhere you looked." At different times during the show, Marsh would be operating the drum machine while Sheila was at various places on stage. "She'd play the timbales, or go to another part of the stage and play a snare drum and an *Octapad*, or she might go to the other end of the stage and play another set of bongos. That show took me three hours to set

up. With Chester I can get it set up in 45 minutes."

Marsh says that another difference between the Prince gig and teching for Chester Thompson is that with Sheila he was more responsible for tuning. "Chester likes to do his own tuning, and I still haven't quite figured it out," he explains. "He makes them sound great, though. He tunes them in a very technical manner and gets each drum sound individually, yet they still sound good together when he plays. It all depends on how a person plays. Ten different people sound ten different ways on the same drumkit."

Paul Jamieson has worked with people like Jeff Porcaro, Gerry Brown, John Guerin, Stix Hooper, Russ Kunkel, Dennis Chambers, Manu Katche, Mickey Curry, Mick Fleetwood, Denny Carmassi, Steve Adler, and Bill Gibson. Paul recalls a nightmare of his own in Africa.

"I was working for Toto, who at the time had the same management as the Brothers Johnson. So the management

asked the Toto sound engineer and myself if we would be interested in going to Africa to do a couple of shows with the Brothers Johnson. I thought, 'I've never been to Africa,' so I went. After getting off the plane, all we could think of was, 'How long do we have to be here?' The day of the show, the group's manager, sound engineer, guitar tech, and I went to the stadium. We had a taxi that was ours for the day, so after checking out the stage and the RA., we decided to go back to the hotel. Well, our car was there, but the driver was nowhere to be found.

"Now, this place made Harlem look like paradise. As we were waiting by the car, a truckload of soldiers passed by, and one of the guys said, 'Jamo, look.' So I took my camera, and as I was focusing, I saw one of the guys pointing at me. The truck stopped, and they all jumped off the truck and surrounded us. The next thing I knew, he was jamming me in the stomach with an uzi, demanding my camera. So I gave it to him. They wanted the film from my camera, but he couldn't advance the cartridge fast enough, so he cut the film out of my camera with a bayonet and slammed the camera back in my stomach. The commanding officer said, 'No pictures,' and they got in their truck and left.

"After three or four stiff gin and tonics at the hotel, we went back to do the show. At the end of the show there was a riot. As about 5,000 people were attacking the stage, my buddies the soldiers came running in from the side. One guy took his machine gun and let loose a round in the air. Then they wanted money from the promoter and the manager to clear the house. That was probably my weirdest experience."

Being the veteran he is, Paul knows there are a great many variables to deal with in a work situation. "Besides the money thing, there are the personalities and egos to deal with. Some people will treat you as an equal, and other people couldn't care less if you're there or not. But a big part of the job is being able to be a team player and fitting in and not causing any waves. You are seeing these people for 18 hours a day for nine months, so it's not always easy. A lot of people think it's a glamorous job and that there are parties all the time. But

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there's a lot of lonely time, and you're away from your family. There's a lot of time when you don't get much sleep, there are a lot of bad accommodations, bad flights, cancelled planes, rain, snow, you might have to load the truck in a downpour...."

But to a kid growing up in Michigan, none of the above was worth considering. It was indeed the excitement that drew Jamieson to carrying in the equipment of local bands. The work he did for his friend Jeff Ocheltree—as third man on with Cobham—ended in L.A. Paul decided to stay in California, which proved to be his turning point, for it was there that he hooked up with an incredible list of drummers. "I worked at SIR in the rehearsal studios when I first got here, and through that I met John Guerin, who I worked with when he was in L.A. Express," he recalls. "He was also a session drummer, so the cartage company would deliver his equipment, and he'd have me set up and change heads and this and that. Through him I met Jeff Porcaro, and through Jeff I met Russ Kunkel. Through Russ I met Jim

Gordon, who introduced me to Jim Keltner. Once you get in with these people it's great, because they are all each other's friends and peers. I feel in my heart that I owe something to all these people."

A large chunk of Paul's time was spent teching for Porcaro. "I learned a lot about tuning and how to get proper sounds in the studio from Jeff. Being a top-call studio player, he was very much in demand and took almost all the work he could. I learned from him how each room is different: Some are more live, some are more dead. And certain drums are right for certain songs. There's a rock-sounding snare drum, a ballad drum, a funk up-tempo sound—he taught me that too."

Jamieson began to get a reputation for customizing snare drums as early as 1975. "I had a friend who dealt vintage guitars, and he showed me the differences in the woods and different makes and models. So I started looking into old snare drums. One thing lead to another, and I began building custom snare drums along with my road work. I still

have an extensive collection, although I don't really have the time to build drums now. I went from building drums to renting drums."

Paul Jamieson Studio Rentals had its humble beginnings while Jamieson was working for Return to Forever. "My friend Gerry Brown was the drummer with that band, and he played North drums at the time. They were great for live, but kind of weird for the studio. We were going to Caribu Ranch to record, and the manager told me to go to the rental places in LA and rent a drumkit for the session. I went all over and all they had was shit for drums. I got the impression after talking to them that drums were kind of a pain for them to deal with, and it was a low priority for them. So I told Chick's manager that I really couldn't find anything good, but that I had a set of Ludwig maple drums in Detroit. I had bought them in high school, and they were in my parents' basement. I made a deal with him that if they shipped the drums to Caribu and I could bring them back in the truck to LA, I would let him use my drums for free in the studio. We got the drums, did the record, and came home, and about three weeks later, the engineer who had done the record called me and wanted to know if I could rent the drumkit to the next project he was working on in town. It just kind of snowballed from there." Today Paul's business flourishes, with an extensive list of drum equipment plus some guitars, basses, amps, and keyboards.

It seems that most techs try to increase their financial security as they become somewhat road-weary. Jeff Ocheltree has been making his own custom drums for many years. Asked to describe them, he says, "They have their own character, and they're gorgeous. And I hate to say it, but they're loud—just like I am," he laughs. "If I just stayed home and built drums, though, I would lose the experience, and the tools would get rusty. What I love about the road is that it's a challenge. You really have to keep your skills going all the time."

"You do get tired of being on the road," Jeff Chonis admits. "It kind of wears you down. At the same time, though, for me at least, it's addictive. I

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have a wife and daughter, and being away from them is hard, though. Also, the financial end is not consistent enough. You do a tour, and then you're unemployed until you find the next tour—and that could take time. Maybe you've made a nice chunk of money and put it away, but you end up spending it if you're off for two months."

Chonis has tried to make finances a bit more steady by starting his own business (with partner Harry McCarthy) called Drum Paradise. Like Jamieson, they rent and set up equipment for a long list of clients that includes Harvey Mason, Luis Conte, Kenny Aronoff, Myron Grombacher, Stan Lynch, and Randy Castillo. But there was no keeping Chonis home last year when he got the offer to work with the Ringo Starr tour.

"First of all, let me say the Ringo Starr tour was the best tour I've ever done in my life. It's going to be hard to top if I do another tour. Working for Ringo was incredible. I go back to that *Ed Sullivan Show* in '64, never thinking in my wildest dreams that I'd even get to meet the guy, let alone work with him and get to know him as a person. The guy is a perfect gentleman and extremely funny. I can't say enough good things about him.

"I also worked with Eric Keltner on that tour, whose main responsibility was to set up Jim's equipment. We worked together on that, and we did the markings. This is basic stuff, but for those who don't know, we have a carpet, and where all the bases of the cymbal stands are, the snare stand, the hi-hat—every place there is a foot that hits the carpet—there's a mark so you know that foot goes right there. Then your height adjustments and tilt adjustments are all marked with ink on the stands, and all the stands are numbered. So when you pull a piece of plumbing out of the hardware box, you know where that piece goes. We did one for each of the three drummers on that tour—Jim Keltner, Levon Helm, and Ringo.

"People have asked if we had electronics on that tour. Oh yeah, we had electronics," he laughs. "Three fans. So this was just a basic acoustic setup. There were four rack toms between the three drummers. Jim had one, Levon had one, and Ringo had two. So it was a tuning thing. Each guy has the way he likes his

drums tuned, and each has a distinct sound. Each snare drum especially sounded different, so instead of it all going together and sounding like a big train wreck, you could actually hear each individual on his snare drum when all three were playing at the same time."

As usual, trial and error entered the picture. "With Levon's kit, there were some problems," he says. "I can remember the snare drum was ringing too much, and he just kind of wanted a short, tight sound. Ringo likes his snare drum tuned down really low, with a lot of snare buzz. So I would fix it for him and then ask how he liked it. If he didn't, I'd change it, and when he did, I'd lock it in my memory. I don't ever approach it by how *I* want it to sound. I ask them how *they* want it to sound."

Just as everyone had nightmares to relate, each tech also had his share of highlights to recall. "Getting compliments on the drum sound was a high point for me," states Ocheltree. "With Bonham, I got a lot of compliments on the sound. He was a great player, so you could have probably given him trash cans and it would have come off right. Billy was the same way, as were Gary Husband, Denny Fongheiser, and Niclas Sigevall. But getting a good review on the sound of the drums still feels great."

"The opening show of *Purple Rain* was great," Brad Marsh recalls. "Hearing that deafening roar of the crowd was incredible. And the awards shows back in the *Purple Rain* days, like the American Music Awards—I'm sure people who hear this will say, 'What? *That* was fun?' There is a lot of pressure put upon you when you do something live like that, where it's one shot, live on national television. It might be more scary than fun, but as long as everything goes alright, I'm fine."

Paul Jamieson recalls: "The last big show I did was the *Live Aid* show in Philadelphia, where I did the drums for Jonathan Moffett with Madonna. Then afterwards, when Phil Collins played with Clapton and then the Zeppelin reunion, I helped my friend Steve Jones, who is a tech with Phil. I got to be two feet behind Phil. That was a major moment."


For Chonis, being a member of the


drum community had particular meaning at the event planned to benefit Mark Craney in July, 1987. "It was a magical day for me," he says with a smile. "There is a comradeship and brotherhood among drummers that you don't find among other musicians, and I feel privileged and honored to work with them. Gregg Bissonette and Myron called me and said they were putting this together, and would I help? They took care of the equipment and the talent and handled the money and promotion, and I was the production manager.

"These guys called me up and said, 'We want to put ten drumkits on stage.' There's your nightmare right there," Jeff laughs. "But the whole thing came off really well. There was this vibe in the air. All these drummers were there donating their time to help out Mark, like the Appice brothers, Vinnie Colaiuta, Terry Bozzio, Steve Smith, Ricky Lawson, Rudy Richman, and many other friends of Mark. For every job that needed to be handled, people gave of themselves because one of *our* guys was in trouble. That was definitely a high point. It made everything else worthwhile."




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# Highlights Of PASIC '90

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Last year's Percussive Arts Society International Convention gave over 3000 drummers and percussionists the opportunity to learn from some of the finest educators and performers in percussion. The four-day event had something for everyone: clinics and performances covering drumset, orchestral percussion, vibraphone, marimba, marching percussion, and much more. *Modern Drummer* was proud to take part in the proceedings by sponsoring several master classes, which brought some well-known players together with drummers in a classroom setting. Here are some of the highlights from the show.



**Casey Scheuerell and Walfredo Reyes, Jr.** teamed up for an all-too-short clinic covering such topics as reading and world-music influences on set drumming.



**Steve Houghton** (pictured right, with student) gave a master class helping students with playing time both in swing and Latin feels.



**Peter Donald** gave a very educational master class focusing on the importance of being relaxed at the kit.



**Clayton Cameron** wowed the audience at his clinic with his fantastic command of brushes. Clayton also gave a master class revealing many of his techniques.

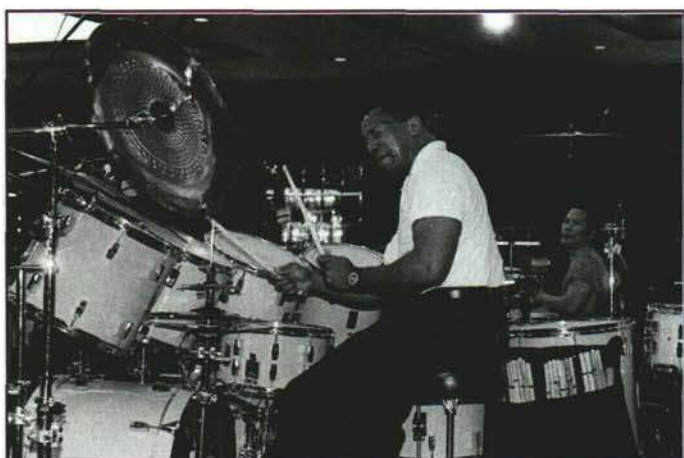


**Will Kennedy** received a standing ovation for the knockout performance he gave at his clinic. Will showed some great groove playing in 6/8, funk, and up-tempo swing, played to a tape, and had a quick little single-stroke roll happening.





**Anton Fig** performed a rousing early-morning clinic on a new set from Yamaha's *Maple Custom* series. Anton also gave a master class.



**Billy Cobham** and percussionist **Nippy Noya** showed in action (and without words) how a drummer and percussionist should work together—by *listening*.



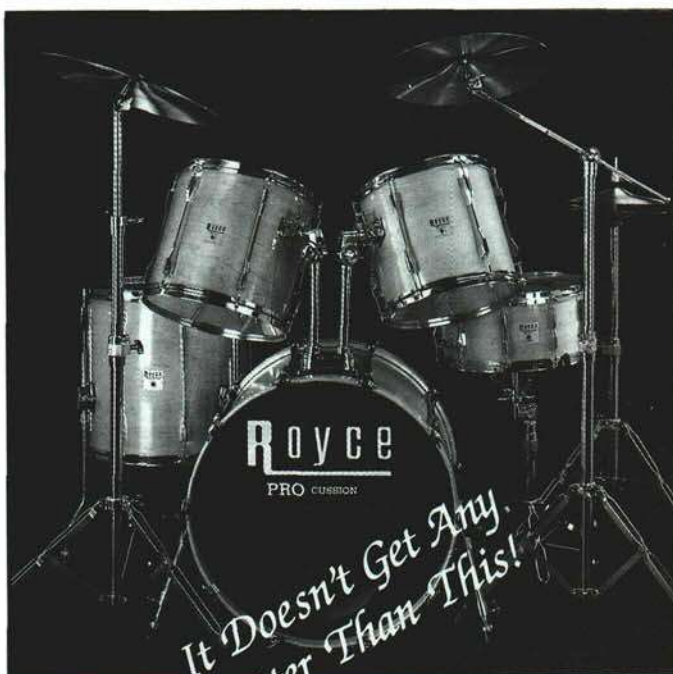
**Jonathan Moffett** (left, shown with student) performed both in clinic and in master class, and proved (with some excellent single bass drum technique) why he is known as "Sugarfoot."



**Gregg Bissonette** (shown with student) flew in from L.A. just for his master class, which had students cramming into a small classroom, and sitting on the floor (some practically in the bass drum). Gregg worked with several students and gave a lot of great tips on swing, funk, and Latin drumming.

Several other excellent master classes and clinics were given by Ed Thigpen, Ed Soph, Bobby Rock, Gary Burton, and Hal Blaine. For all in attendance, it was an incredible learning experience.

Photos by Adam J. Budofsky, Rick Mattingly, and Lissa Wales



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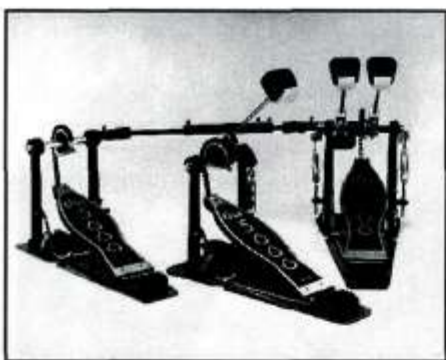
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## New From DW

Drum Workshop has unveiled their new 5002A and 5000A Accelerator double and single bass drum pedals. Both pedals feature a newly developed chain and offset cam/sprocket drive system. According to DW, this drive system reduces the distance the footboard, chain, and beater ball move, resulting in a more direct, sensitive, and powerful stroke while providing smoother pedal action.

The 5002A double pedal features several additional upgrades, including dual pedal plates, twin oil-flow universal joints, a fully adjustable lightweight linkage assembly, and a compact, one-piece primary pedal/auxiliary beater casing. The 5000A is a single bass drum version of the pedal.



DW has also introduced a new drum-finishing process called *FinishPly*. Instead of the polyester finish used on other DW drums, *FinishPly* drums feature a pre-finished, butt-seamed (not overlapped) outer drum ply. DW claims that the *FinishPly* process doesn't negatively affect the sound or performance of drums the way plastic coverings do.

DW's *FinishPly* drums are available in a choice of white, black, red, and blue. DW, 2697 Lavery Ct., Unit 16, Newbury Park, CA 91320, (805) 499-6863.

## New Sonor Kit And Pedal

Sonor's new *Force 3000* kit was designed as an upscale version of their *Force 2000*

kit. The kit's toms and snare drum are constructed from 9-ply, 7.5mm, cross-laminated birch shells, while the bass drums are 11-ply, 8.5mm birch. Features include *HiLite*-style chrome tubular lugs,



lacquered wood bass drum hoops, fold-away bass drum spurs with memory gauges to set angle and leg height, and an upgraded *Force* series tom holder.

*Force 3000* drums are available in a full range of component sizes, as well as four drumkit configurations. The drums are available in black gloss, snow white, and silver gray, as well as in Scandinavian birch finish. To complement the kit, a new line of 3000 series chrome-plated hardware has been introduced, with double braces and memory locks at all height tiers.

Also new from Sonor is their Z 9392 *Protec* double bass drum pedal. The Z 9392 uses Sonor's Z 9390 chain-driven *Protec* pedal as the primary pedal, and adds an auxiliary chain pedal that the company says provides quick, accurate response without the usual auxiliary pedal "drag."

The Z 9392 features a telescopic connecting rod—which is hinged on both sides for angling and placement of each individual pedal—and tension-adjustable expansion springs for both pedals. Other features include two-piece footboards with removable toe stops, a standard T-screw/plate hoop clamp, a left pedal support plate, and a noise-eliminating muffler for the chain guides. Sonor, c/o Korg USA, 89 Frost St., Westbury, NY 11590, tel: (516) 333-9100, fax: (516) 333-9108.

## Sabian Expands Cymbal Range

Sabian has added several new cymbals to its catalog. First off, the company says that its new *HH Thin Chinese* cymbals are more durable than their counterparts from the Middle East. And the *Carmine Appice* signature cymbal is now available in 16", 18", and 20" versions. *Carmine Appice* cymbals are unique to Sabian's line because they are the only ones hammered from a nickel-silver alloy.

Sabian has also added rock models and a China splash to its mid-priced *B8 Pro* line. *B8 Pro Rock* models include 14" hi-hats, 16" and 18" crashes, a 20" *Light* ride, and a 20" *Power* ride. The *B8 Pro* China splash is lower-pitched than traditional splashes, and Sabian describes the cymbal's sound as "fast and cutting with a raw, trashy Oriental edge." It's available in 8" and 10" sizes.

Finally, Sabian has released two new ranges of band cymbals, the *AA Classic Band*, and the budget-priced *B8 Pro Marching Band*. The *AA Classic Band* series are medium-heavy models of pure cast, rolled, and hammered bronze. The same cymbals can also be incorporated into a drumkit: a pair of the 14" size as hi-hats, 16" and 18" as crash/rides, and a 20" for a ride. This enables band directors to avoid purchasing an additional, dedicated set of cymbals for this purpose. The *B8 Pro Marching Band* models mark Sabian's first application of the *B8* series to the field of hand cymbals. These heavy-weight, Euro-style pairings are available in 14", 16", 18", and 20" sizes, and feature a *Brilliant* finish. Sabian, Meductic, New Brunswick, Canada E0H 1L0, tel: (506) 272-2019, fax: (506) 328-9697, telex: 014-27541.

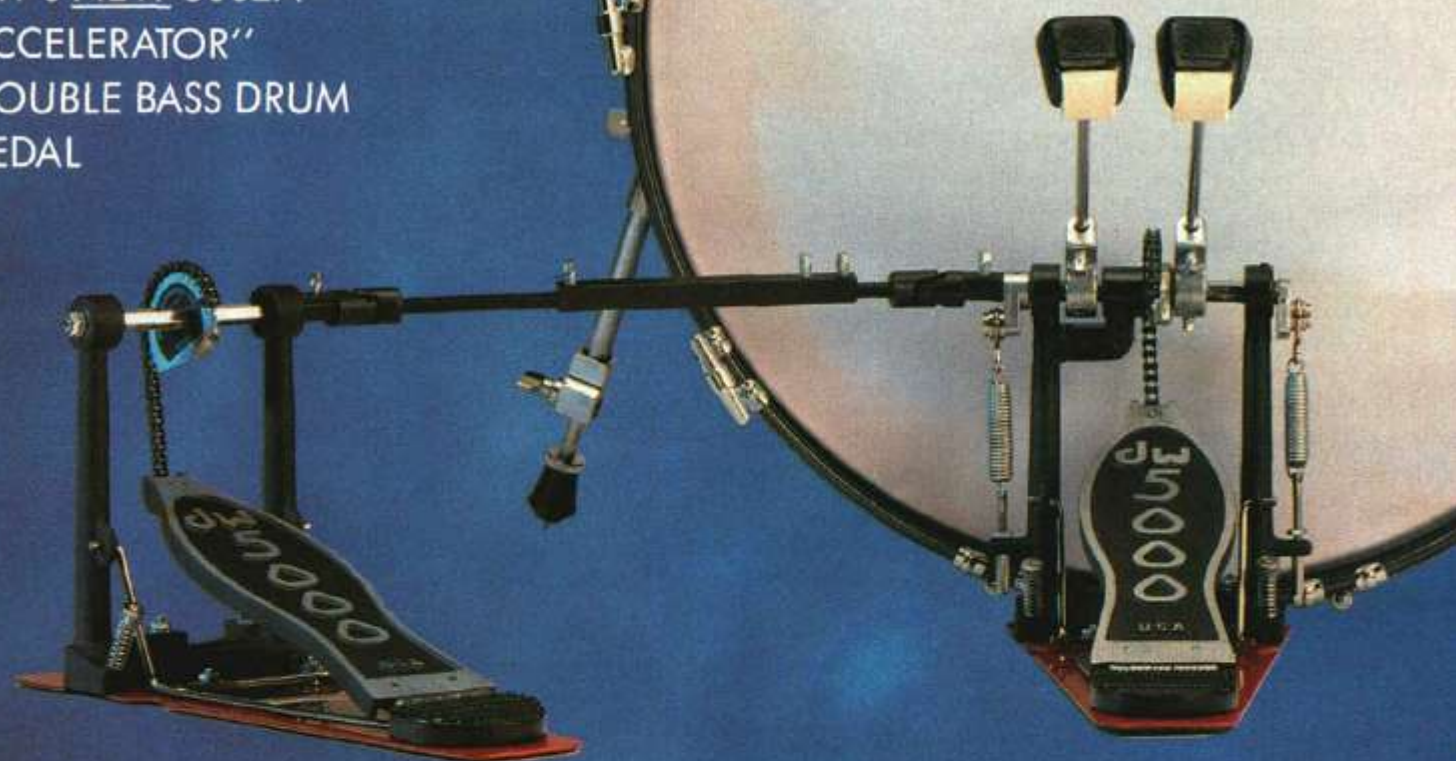
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Noble & Cooley's *Classic SS* solid-shell snares. Noble & Cooley says that the new *H.P.* series gives younger drummers the chance to enjoy a top-quality drum at a somewhat lower cost, and offers an alternative sound for the professional.

The *H.P.* series features five models. In addition to the 4 1/2x14 and 6 1/2x14 primary snares, new 6 1/2x12, 6x13, and 4 1/2x13 models are also available. The drums also come in a new range of colors: purple, hot salmon, yellow, aquamarine, and white. **Noble & Cooley, Water Street, Granville, MA 01034.**

## Pearl Soprano Snare And Export SX Kit

Pearl has announced the introduction of a new piccolo snare drum and upgrades to its *Export* series kits. Pearl's new piccolo snare is its *Soprano* model. The drum measures 3x13 and comes in brass and

maple shells.

In addition, all Pearl *Export* drums now feature birch-lined shells, the *P-780* chain-drive pedal, fully telescopic *730M* convertible spike/rubber-tipped spurs, high-tension style lugs, and *850* series hardware. *Export SX* kits feature quartz coverings in three colors: black, blue, and purple quartz. Pearl says that these coverings change color in reaction to various stage lighting techniques. **Pearl Corporation, P.O. Box 111240, Nashville, TN 37211-3140.**



## ddrum FadStation And Sound Pacs

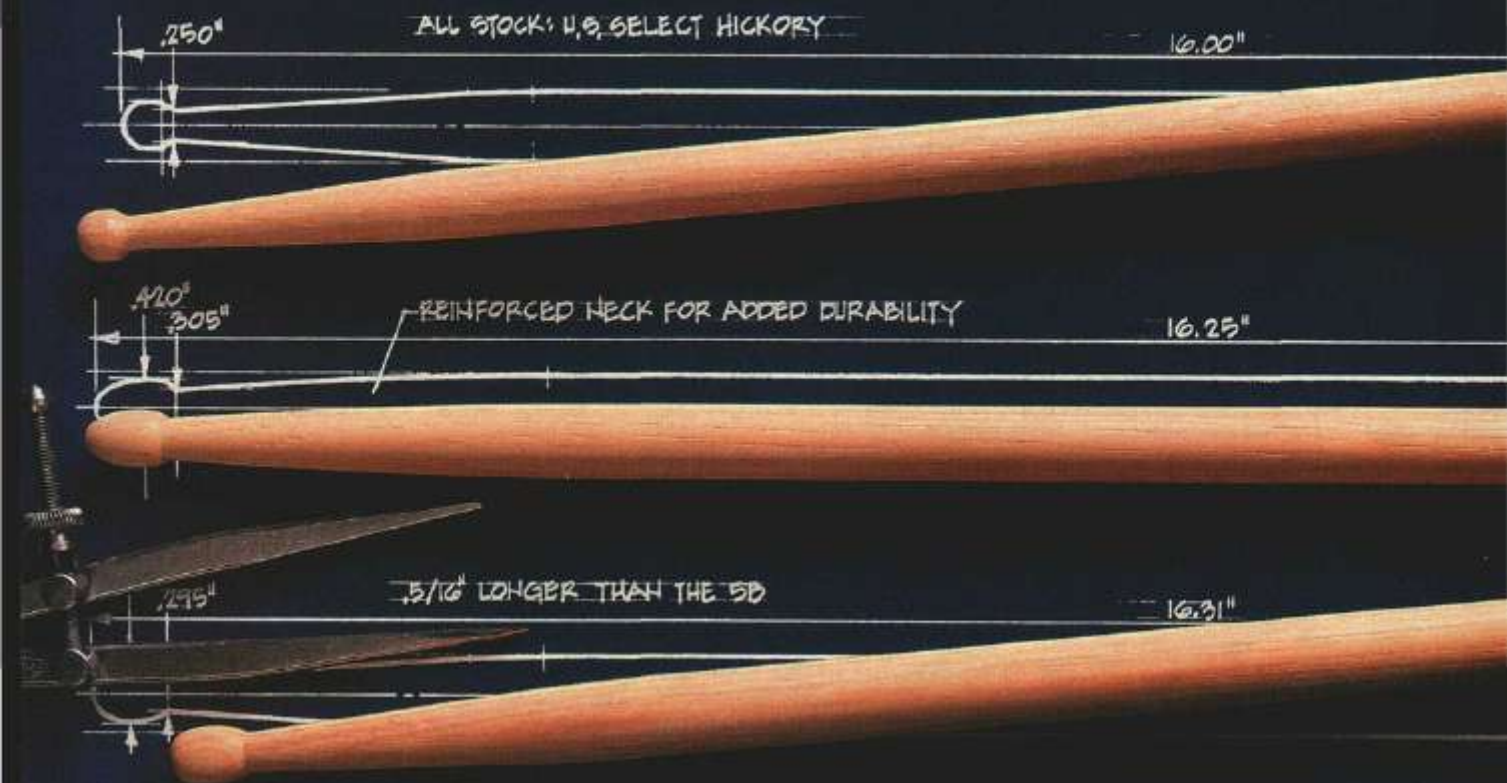
ddrum's *PadStation* is a multipad that features actual drumheads and rims to more accurately mimic the feel of acous-



tic drums. With the *PadStation*, drummers can set MIDI channel, note number, gate time, and velocity curve. Parameters can be stored in 16 kit configurations.

Also new from ddrum are *Sound Pac*

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software series, featuring the drum sounds of various top drummers. First to be released are *Sound Pacs* from Peter Erskine and Larrie Londin. **ddrum, P.O. Box 166, 25 Lindeman Dr., Trumbull, CT 06611, tel: (203) 374-0020, fax: (203) 371-6206.**

## Audio-Technica Pro 25 and Pro 8 Mic's

Audio-Technica has introduced two new mic's: the *Pro 25* and the *Pro 8*. The *Pro 25* hypercardioid dynamic mic' was designed to be particularly suited to applications involving high sound pressure levels. According to its makers, because of its efficient motor system, large diaphragm, and well-controlled polar pattern, the *Pro 25* is effective in picking up highly dynamic instruments

such as drums. The mic' offers a 30 - 12,000Hz frequency response, 600-ohm balanced output, and -57.8dBm sensitivity.



The *Pro 8* head-worn unidirectional dynamic mic' was designed to be ideal for drummers. The mic' is worn around the back of the head for reduced visibility, and self-positioning pads are used to keep the mic' from being easily shaken off. The miniature dynamic element provides response from 70 to 15,000Hz, with a sensitivity of -70dBm. Weighing just one ounce, the *Pro 8* features a durable gooseneck for maximum flexibility and comfort. It's equipped with a 16 1/2' cable and an XLRM-type plug. Standard acces-

sories include a windscreen and belt clip. **Audio-Technica U.S., Inc., 1221 Commerce Dr., Stow, OH 44224, (216) 686-2600.**

## PureCussion Seat And Stand

PureCussion has recently introduced a bicycle-style padded seat as a retro-fit to manufacturers' padded round seats using 7/8" shafts. The extra-thick foam is contoured for comfort and covered with a heavy-duty "no sweat" gray velour. Sides and bottom are of tough black *Naugahyde*. A complete throne package is also available and features a double-braced, three-legged base, threaded piano-style height adjustment, and a positive height locking device.

Also new from PureCussion is a lightweight, expandable rack system. Model *DSS 4006* features a 40" free-

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## Calato And Noble & Cooley Drumstick Line

Calato/Regal Tip and Noble & Cooley have announced the joint development of a series of hickory drumsticks that incorporate an impact-absorbing design. Manufactured and marketed by Calato under the name "Regal Tip for Noble & Cooley," the sticks are available in *Light*, *Medium*, *Heavy*, and *Extra Heavy* models.

According to designer Bob Gatzen, the sticks' performance, durability, and acoustical characteristics are improved via a unique stick shape with a multiple-angled shoulder. This shoulder design centers the weight of the stick to achieve improved balance, and promotes better shock absorption. All four models have also been designed with a barrel-shaped

bead for a fuller, rounder drum and cymbal sound. All sticks also feature a consistent shape, length, and feel to minimize the adaptations drummers sometimes feel they have to make when switching between sticks of different weights to suit various playing situations. **Calato, 4501 Hyde Park Blvd., Niagara Falls, NY 14305, tel: (716) 285-3546, fax: (716) 285-2710; Noble & Cooley, Water St., Granville, MA 01034.**

## Yamaha Marching And Percussion Gear

Yamaha's Band & Orchestral Division has introduced their new *Corps Custom* marching snare drum model *MS-9014*. According to Yamaha, the drum's arched, zinc-alloy lug casing is capable of absorbing great stress. The 11 1/2x14 6-ply birch shell, in conjunction with a 6-ply birch reinforcement ring, provide maximum

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Also new is Yamaha's *MS 7014 Power Tech* marching snare drum. Utilizing Yamaha's *Air Seal System*, this 12x14 drum is made from seven cross-laminated plies of birch. Featured are high-tension lug casings, ten individually adjustable *FibreTech* snares, and horizontal and vertical adjustment knobs.

In the percussion department, the

company's *StrikeForce* drumsticks, geared toward the younger percussionist, are offered in 2B and 5B wood tips and fall in a reduced price range. New to the *Field-Master* marching bass drum mallet line is the *MBM-500* jumbo hard felt mallet, available in a variety of sizes, both hard and soft. Yamaha's *Artist-Master* line of keyboard mallets has also been extended, and the *MSP-14* transparent marching snare drum sound projector is now available. **Yamaha Corp. of America, Band & Orchestral Div., 3445 East Paris Ave., SE, P.O. Box 899, Grand Rapids, MI 49512-0899, (616) 940-4900.**

## LP Trap Table

LP Music Group's drumset and hardware division, CP, has introduced the *Trap Table*. Featuring an 18x25 felt-covered table top and height adjustment from 31" to 42", the *Trap Table* enables

easy access to percussion instruments. The *Trap Table* also disassembles easily for transportation. **Latin Percussion, Inc., 160 Belmont Ave., Garfield, NJ 07026.**

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Photo Gallery  
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